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THE NI
NEW INTERNATIONALIST

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THE PEOPLE, THE IDEAS, THE ACTION IN THE FIGHT FOR WORLD DEVELOPMENT

Filthy rich!

The new robber barons

New Internationalist
PULLOUT INSIDE

coming next MONTH

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- **Turning the tide** – a report on India's tribal peoples.
- **Between poverty and purity** – how racist scapegoating is catching on in Russia.
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ATTENTION ALL NI READERS!

We hold a **New Internationalist** Annual Editorial Meeting in October to decide on magazine topics for the coming year. We would like to discuss your ideas, views and comments on the magazine at that meeting. Any readers who have already written in with ideas will have them fed in to the meeting. But if you haven't already done so, please write to Nikki van der Gaag here at the **NI** by September 15th.

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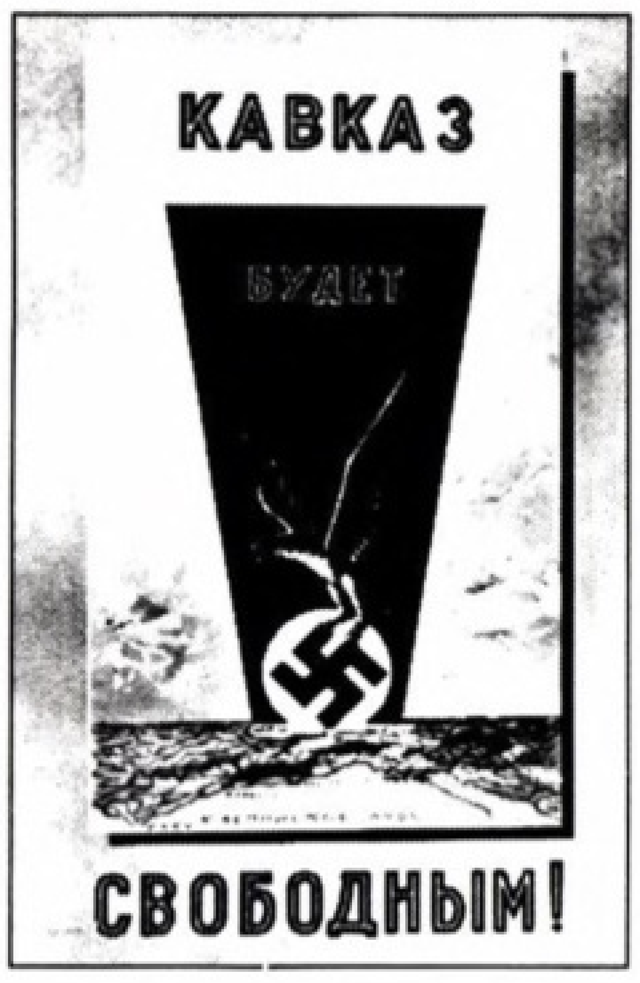

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FRONT COVER: PHOTO BY **PAUL BEVITT.** MODEL BY **RON MUECK.**
MAGAZINE DESIGNED BY **ALAN HUGHES.**

THIS MONTH'S **THEME**

Filthy rich!

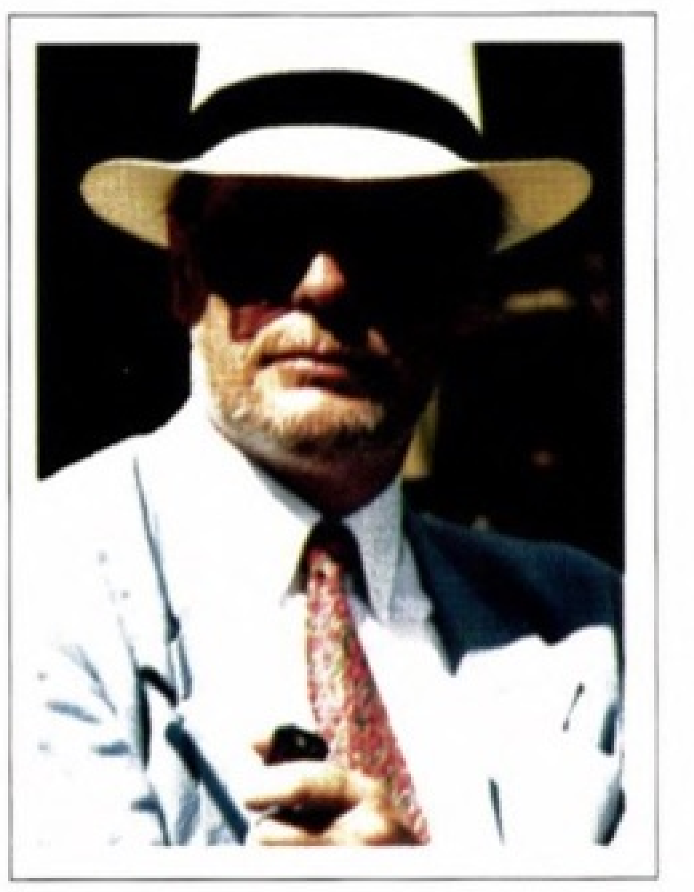
FROM THIS MONTH'S **EDITOR**

Yes, that's me in the picture, dressed up for the Henley Royal Regatta. The Regatta is on the summer high-society circuit that staggers around London and its environs for months on end, from Royal Ascot, Wimbledon and garden parties to balls of all kinds, doing absolutely nothing and consuming the most enormous quantities of champagne as it goes.

I thought I'd better undertake some in-depth, on-the-spot reporting on the rich. I am now able to report, exclusively for this magazine, that the rich are still there – and still rich.

With Alan Hughes, the designer of this issue – it is important to get the 'look' right – we planned to track down Donald Trump somewhere exotic, preferably on a yacht. We also considered a participant-observer study of the psychopathology of Monte Carlo casino *habitués*, but we found it hard to put up the cash for the chips.

This has been our basic problem. We have insufficient funds for our action research. Since we work for a non-profit, non-hierarchical, equal-pay, co-operatively-run, radical-progressive journal funded entirely by you, our subscribers, it is easy to feel morally superior to the rich. But it's much harder to track them down and find out what they're up to, which can come expensive.



Once I got past the security guards in Henley it was almost unbearably distressing just to watch, beneath banks of purple umbrellas on the lawns of a very exclusive club by the River Thames, the equivalent of our entire annual budget being knocked back every few minutes in $200 bottles of champagne. From time to time the same amount of money chugged past in the form of a nineteenth-century, reconditioned, steam-driven river cruiser with a very pretty fringe on top.

What is more, I only got in because I was with my twin brother, who belongs to the club. In our youth I was supposed to be the clever one while he always seemed to have the cash, whereas in middle age he has considerably more cash while I have turned out not to be so clever after all. Added to sibling rivalry, from the day my parents took me round my first stately home, I've always felt that somehow I was meant to live in one. So you can see how deeply my feelings for the rich are motivated by envy and the desire for revenge.

I have found it extremely difficult to achieve a full expression of these feelings. There is a chronic shortage of politically-correct terms of personal abuse. I favoured 'rich bastards', but decided this might prove more offensive to some of you than to the rich. 'Swine' is offensive to our four-legged friends. As for 'filthy', what's so great about washing?

Well, do *you* have any better suggestions? It is, I think, a sad thing if you don't have the right language to be very abusive when absolutely necessary.

David Ransom.

David Ransom
for the ***New Internationalist*** *Co-operative*

Ray of hope?

I was delighted by Richard Swift's passionate and insightful keynote article (**NI 257**) yet depressed by the enormity of the task in tackling the Leviathan of global financial institutions. The situation he describes seems to be everywhere apparent: those holding the reins of power will always dwell on internal changes to the details of a system, pleading their own powerlessness in the face of larger forces. In so doing they divert attention from questioning the premises on which that very system is based, as though its rules had been cut in stone forever.

NO. 257 / JULY 1994
THE NI NEW INTERNATIONALIST
Squeezing the South
World Bank, IMF, GATT...
50 years is enough
Special POSTER inside

To those of us who look for radical change, the dilemma is how to create and hang on to new models when we are daily engulfed in the ramifications of the presiding one. This has ever been the predicament of a paradigm change: one has to hold on until there is sufficient disturbance within the system that it becomes impossible not to change. Certainly there is currently no shortage of disturbance within global systems. Is there possibly then a ray of hope within this darkness?

David Clark
London, UK

Eritrea

I have just received your issue on the World Bank/IMF (**NI 257**).

When studying your special poster I discovered that, despite the fact that Eritrea has been independent for over a year and is a full member of the UN and OAU with its own embassies, it is marked on your poster as still being occupied by Ethiopia. What a blunder! How come?

Bernt Karlsson
Caritas Sverige, Sweden

Ed: we apologize. It in no way reflects any disparagement of Eritrea on our behalf.

The **New Internationalist** welcomes your letters. But please keep them short. They may be edited for purposes of space or clarity. Include a home telephone number if possible and send your letters to the nearest editorial office. The address is inside the front cover.

Internet

The media has always been directed by the few at the many. Communication by any person directly to any other on large-scale interactive networks is very different. Your article 'More technology, less equality' in the issue on the media (**NI 256**) dismisses this possibility.

Maintaining a regular readership involves looking at things through the same coloured glasses as they do. An aversion to products of the capitalist system may be common amongst **NI** readers – the effects of the system as shown by **NI** makes it difficult for them to be otherwise.

But the **NI** would be wise not to dismiss the self-educating respect-exercising and myth-exposing opportunities provided by the Internet, now connecting 0.36 per cent of the world's population. This could also allow the laying of a solid foundation for a better world.

Gio Frank
Caerdydd, Cymru

Not an insult

'Not North or South' by David Giles on your *Letters* page (**NI 256**) perturbs me somewhat. I agree that the use of 'North' and 'South' as euphemisms for 'rich' and 'poor' is inaccurate as well as obscuring the real issue to a slight extent; but why does he regard it as insulting to the rich in southern countries? If it is not insulting to a poor country to call it poor, then why is it insulting to rich southern countries to call poor northern countries southern?

Clive Semmens
Ely, UK

Facing the truth

I was horrified to read Christopher Innocent's letter (*Letters,* **NI 256**) : 'It is the role of television, politics and religion to gloss over hard truths...' I have to admit with sorrow that some church people fail to understand or act on this teaching. But this doesn't detract from the extremely radical and challenging message of Jesus Christ, which is very far from being comfortable.

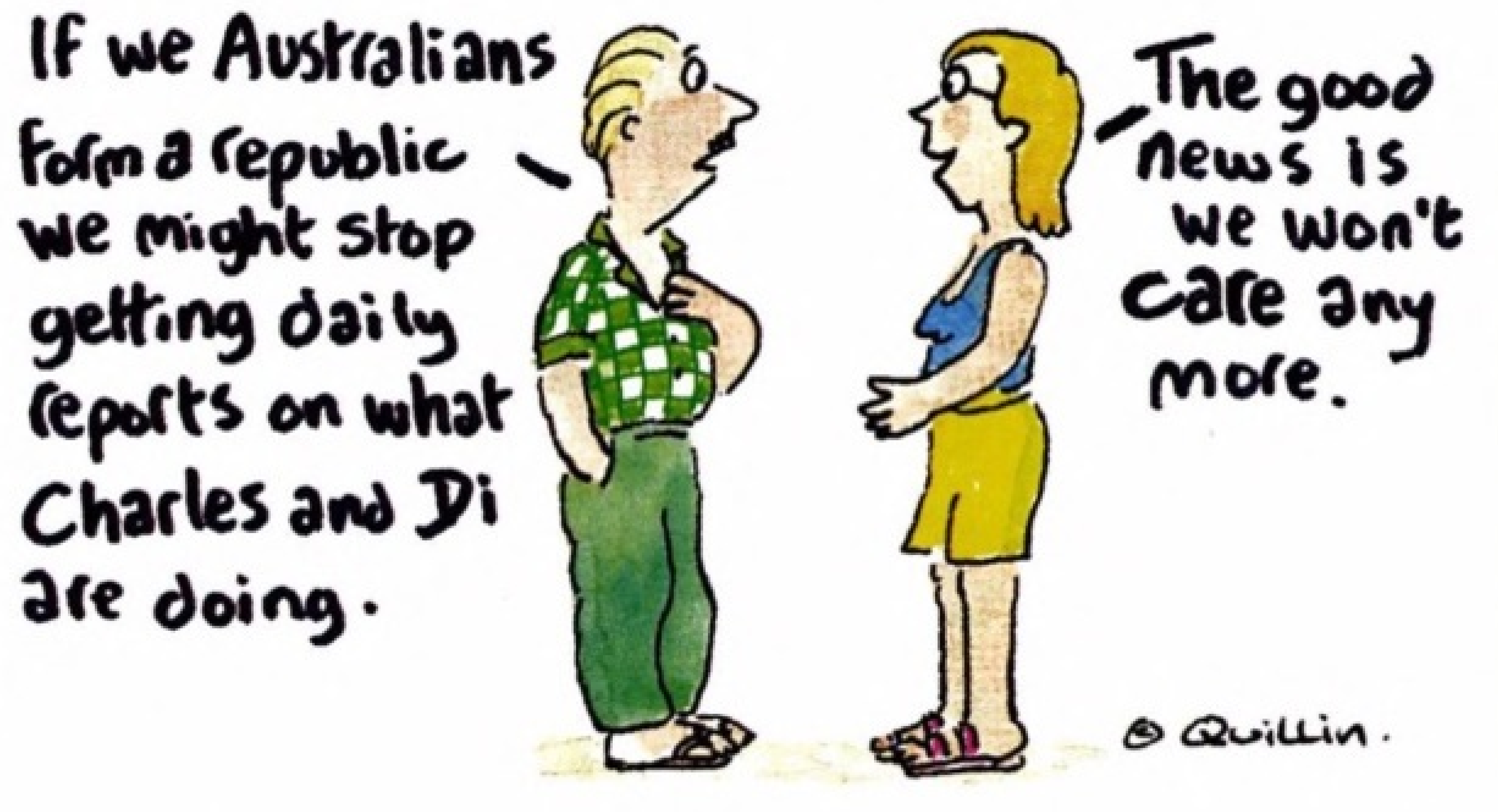
I agree totally with the rest of his letter. We do need to hear unpalatable truths about our world as it really is. Sanitized versions of horror cease to be true. If we are to fight such things we have to know what we are up against.

Margaret Thomas
Chalfont St Peter, UK

Royal curiosity

Why does the *Letters* page contain views from a diversity of countries and the *Curiosities* page only those from the Commonwealth? Is curiosity a trait possessed only by those loyal to the British monarchy and if so will I lose this inquisitive quality if Australia becomes a republic?

G L Cain
Rockhampton, Australia


If we Australians form a republic we might stop getting daily reports on what Charles and Di are doing.
The good news is we won't care any more.
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VIV QUILLIN

Confused study

Your issue on Northern Ireland (**NI 255**) strikes me as having fallen victim to a desire to adopt a 'radical chic' line which allows little deviation to account for the huge complexities of the situation. There was only a derisory effort in the issue to gain any understanding of Unionism. Given that Unionists make up approximately 60 per cent of the population in the North of Ireland their ideology is surely significant to any understanding of the conflict.

The major Republican voice in Ireland today is John Hume, and yet there was little mention of him in the issue despite the fact that it is his efforts which have brought the present peace process so far.

However, he is not involved in killing people so he must be less interesting than Martin McGuinness... Only Dave Duggan's article began to address the central question of how we, as Irish people, can accommodate our various ideologies and aspirations in a way that will allow us to share our island in peace.

Ultimately the magazine is more useful as a case study of a British editor's confusion rather than as a means to gain some understanding of the conflict in the North.

Aidan McQuade
Tigray, Ethiopia

Historic compromise

The magazine on Northern Ireland (**NI 255**) provides a very skewed view of current realities which stems in part from the imposition of a colonial model of understanding the conflict. There is a consistent tendency to depict the objectives of Irish nationalist – whether constitutional or violent – as essentially progressive and to portray Unionism as reactionary and irrational.

The issue is grossly over-optimistic about the prospects of a settlement. Today's Republican leadership remains committed to the ending of the internationally-recognised constitutional position of Northern Ireland in the UK and in effect forcing the Protestants of the North into a republic of which they have no desire to be members. On the other hand, there are signs that the key political leaders in the South are willing to accept a 'solution' that would involve power-sharing in the North and strong North-South institutions in areas like energy and tourism.

While this would be rejected by Sinn Fein, the loyalist paramilitaries and the DUP, it could have the support of the parties that can claim the electoral backing of the majority of the Catholic and Protestant population in Northern Ireland – the SDLP and the Official Unionists. Such a settlement would represent an historic compromise between nationalism and unionism, not the strategy of nationalist victory which Sinn Fein and, we are sorry to say, your issue supports.

Henry Patterson and **Peter Weinreich**
University of Ulster, Northern Ireland

Garbage dumping

Since 1982 a whole train filled with highly-explosive garbage has been standing near Tirana. The Germans refuse to take it back. The dumping of chemical or radioactive garbage by industrial countries on the developing world is a major issue. It involves indifference and recklessness on the part of those creating the wastes – the nuclear industry is a prime example, continuing to expand while still having no solution to its waste problem.

I hope that the **NI** will be able to dedicate a month's theme to this issue.

Marion Laudy,
London, UK

ATTENTION ALL READERS!

The NI holds an annual meeting in October to decide the following year's topics. If any readers have concrete suggestions, they are welcome to send their ideas to the editor of the *Letters* page by mid-September. One or two paragraphs only, please!

The views expressed on the letters page are not necessarily those of the NI.

Letter from Lagos

A sporting chance

Nigeria is not lacking in sporting talent. What its young people lack is the opportunity to show what they can do. **Elizabeth Obadina** experiences the joy and the sorrow of Nigerian football.

WEDNESDAY 22 JUNE 1994. Time: 3.00 am. Place: anywhere in Nigeria. Car horns blared. Gongs banged. Bells rang. Whoops of sheer delight pierced the calm of the deep dead of night. Why? Why else but to celebrate Nigeria's first victory in the World Cup: a 3-0 win over Bulgaria.

National spirits soared again briefly and noisily when the national team, the Super Eagles, scored their first and only goal against Argentina and for a third time when the team won its match against Greece.

For an all-too-short fortnight Nigeria's World Cup soccer triumphs cheered a nation sunk deep in political and economic gloom.

On 5 July the dream shattered. When Italy's Roberto Baggio scored his 89th-minute goal against Nigeria a long moan shuddered through the land. My youngest son burst into tears. The premature dancing and backslapping stopped. Patriotic ecstasy had been waxing strong for nearly an hour following Nigerian teenager Emmanual Amunike's opening goal. 'Please,' went up the collective prayer. 'Let Nigeria do something right for once.' The Italian's equalizer came like a cold shower and Baggio's extra-time second goal felt like the executioner's axe.

As the match ended the electricity cut off. In normal circumstances noisy household generators spring to life almost immediately. But that sad night there was gloom and silence, and my neighbourhood sat in the dark around dead TV sets. No-one felt like moving.

When I eventually fumbled out to start our generator I bumped into my neighbour who was gazing at the stars. 'You know, Liz,' he said, 'it's a shame, but I'm not really sorry we lost. We've got so many basic things to put right here before we can begin congratulating ourselves.'

The morning after the defeat it seemed as though Nigeria's 90 million people had already forgotten that for four short two-hour sessions over the past fortnight they had rooted together, cheered together and wept together – as Nigerians. It was back to 1990's militarized business-as-normal, playing off one ethnic group against another.

The chairperson of the National Sports Commission later announced that the Super Eagles Dutch coach would be replaced with another foreigner. 'We haven't solved our ethnic differences, so it would be difficult for a local man to take over and not be accused of favouritism,' one sports editor commented.

Give local talent the 'foreign' treatment and stars are born. The route of the Super Eagles to the very top came via European football clubs who had recognized and nurtured youthful talent spotted in Nigeria. Not only football. Sprinter Mary Onyeli and her male counterparts train in America. American basketball's 'Most Valuable Player' is Nigerian: Akeem 'The Dream' Olaiuwon. The list goes on. Britain's Daley Thompson was born 'Dele' Thompson.

But all this should be no surprise. After all, virtually every black athlete from the Americas and Europe has ancestral roots in West Africa. Before Ghana was the Gold Coast. Before the Gold Coast, the Slave Coast which oozed evilly eastwards through Nigeria.

ILLUSTRATION: ALISON MORETON

The mind boggles at what Nigerian youth could achieve given just half the sporting chance the average secondary school student in the West enjoys. Because despite enjoying the obvious *kudos* earned by the Nigerian athlete who defies all the odds to win, government after government has not invested in sports. Nor are sports treated seriously in Nigerian schools.

My area boasted a large open space that 20 years ago had been designated for a youth sports stadium. It has now been parcelled up and built over with luxury flats and houses owned largely by senior government officials and military officers. Down the road is a half-built stadium. Work stopped here ages ago. I pray it is not one of those FIFA hopes to use when Nigeria hosts the junior World Cup next year.

The miracle is that pathetic facilities, administrative politicization, graft and incompetence have not killed boys' zest for sports. The girls, I beg to leave for another time. But boys improvize. Car wheels become dumb-bells. Any piece of wood serves as a table tennis bat and any flat surface as a table tennis surface. Open ground becomes the venue of a myriad Sunday-league matches, the 'leagues' being unofficial hometown and apprentices' clubs. Barefoot and full of hope, Nigeria's youth waits for the leadership and investment that will give them the chance to show their talent to the world. ■

Elizabeth Obadina is a freelance writer and journalist living in Lagos.

The new robber barons

BARRY LEWIS / NETWORK

Behind every fortune lies a crime. ***David Ransom*** *argues that we've forgotten the lessons of history and opened the door to a new breed of voracious profiteers.*

No rain ever falls on the starkly beautiful Atacama Desert of northern Chile. Here you will find the huge and fabulously rich Chuquicamata copper mine, one of the artificial wonders of the world, its terraces carved from the rock like a Greek amphitheatre for giants.

At the turn of the century only a few lonely prospectors wandering in the wilderness knew about its hidden wealth. But the Guggenheim family, who were making a relatively modest fortune from silver mining in Mexico at the time, were also sniffing around Chile and came across Chuquicamata more or less by accident. They snapped it up for a couple of hundred thousand dollars, figured out that it was the largest single deposit of copper in the world, and waited.

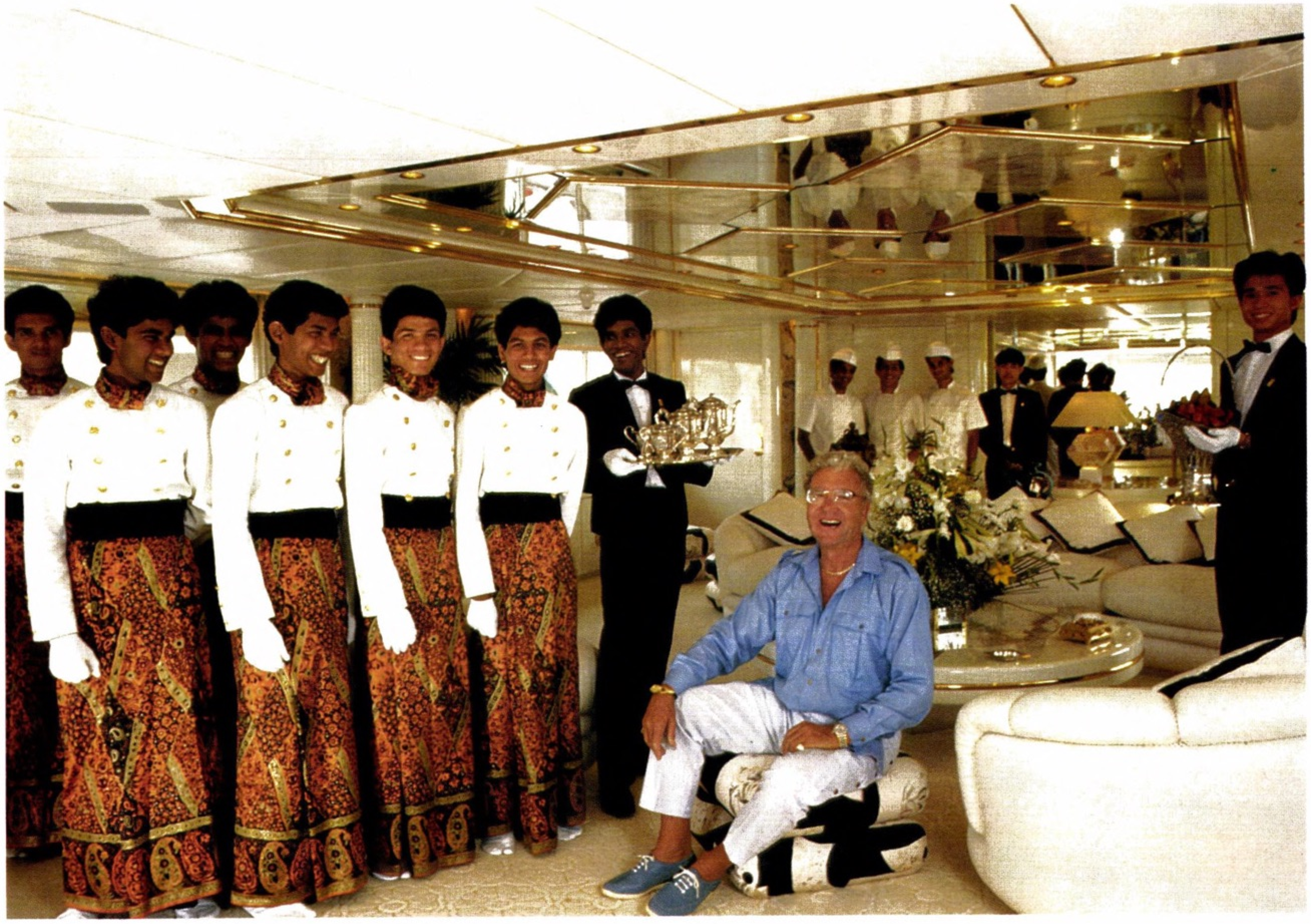
They did not have to wait for long. The richest of all the big US copper companies, Anaconda, had exhausted its old mines and wanted Chuquicamata badly. So badly that in 1902 they paid the Guggenheims $100 million – that's a billion (yes, one thousand million) or so dollars at today's prices – for control of it. A nice little earner from a couple of years' work by the Guggenheims.

The Guggenheims eventually became great philanthropists and endowed one of the world's prettiest art museums in New York. Anaconda, on the other hand, had to set about the more mundane task of recovering its money. Chuquicamata would have to earn the most fabulous profits for the deal to pay off. It did, many times over, decade after decade.

The only people who made absolutely *nothing* from the deal were the Chilean miners who did the work. Their function was to toil away, forever digging what soon became the biggest artificial hole in the world, to pay Anaconda for a deal they had played no part whatever in making. They were, you might say, paying for the Guggenheim Museum in New York, when everyone thought it was the Guggenheims.[1]

Every fortune is made in this way, for personal wealth is no more than a badge of competence at getting someone else to pay your bills.

What we are talking about here, however, is not just any old personal fortune or



BARRY LEWIS / NETWORK

Abraham van Leeuwen likes to be known as 'Prince Leo of Lignac' by the Sri Lankan stewards on his $32 million yacht in Marbella. The crest embroidered on his leather-bound toilet seat (opposite page) is in pure gold thread. The 'Floating Prince' claims to have made his fortune from publishing cookery cards.

the nicer distinctions of wealth between most of us, whatever we may own or howsoever we may have earned it. There are individuals whose personal wealth is now measured not just in hundreds or thousands but in *thousands of millions* of dollars.

Their appetite for riches, for possessions and power knows no bounds. They are driven by obsessions akin to madness, by an evangelical belief in their own genius that, left to its own devices, would make monsters of us all. We only have to retrieve the evidence from our own history to see that this is so.

The turn of the century was a particularly good time for philanthropists. Not just the Guggenheims but the Rockefellers, the Carnegies and a brace of others in the US were founding the super-rich dynasties whose names are better remembered today, if at all, for the philanthropic institutions they named after themselves.

At the time, however, not everyone called these people philanthropic. In fact the preferred popular term for them was 'robber barons'. For this was the great age of private-monopoly industrial empires in the US. Extraordinary personal fiefdoms were built from oil, mining, railways, steel, newspapers, all the large-scale modern industries of the day. They were ruled as absolute dictatorships by a savage breed of ruthless megalomaniacs.

Personal wealth is no more than a badge of competence at getting someone else to pay your bills.

It was one of those moments in history when, as if by alchemy, fresh ways of making a personal fortune beyond anyone's wildest imaginings suddenly materialized. At first, other people just looked on in stunned amazement. But eventually, after long and often violent conflicts with the people they employed, the robber barons were tamed. The dangers of unrestrained, monopolistic power wielded by individuals who frequently turned out to have been almost completely insane were recognized. 'Anti-trust' – anti-monopoly in the UK – and labour-rights legislation by governments with at least some democratic credentials moderated the excesses, or saved capitalism from self-destruction, depending on your point of view.

We are now, I think, living through a similar historical moment. At no time since then have the super-rich got richer and more powerful with quite such effortless ease.

The fiefdoms of the new robber barons may look a bit different. Code names like 'deregulation' and 'structural adjustment' conceal their true identity. They are being built on new territory: retailing, information technology, mass communications, entertainment, financial speculation and 'kleptocracy' – government by thieves.

In the relatively fresh pastures of Japan and Southeast Asia the biggest bucks have so far been made from real estate, like the chunk of central Tokyo inherited by the Mori brothers that helps them to weigh in with a personal fortune of $13 billion. The shift from 'corporate' to personal wealth has only just begun in this part of the world. As elsewhere, it is happening because the restraints have been removed, the lessons apparently forgotten.

But in many essential respects the new fiefdoms of the robber barons are the same. They are, as ever, exclusively male. Apart from the odd monarch, widow or daughter of wealth, there are still very few women to be found among the world's richest people. This suggests that the quest for unlimited money and power is one of the nastier products of male fantasy. Unchanged too is the urge to found dynasties, the craving for monopoly power and the Napoleon-complexes of the individuals concerned.

Some of us were, I think, distracted by what we took for a brand-new world. We gazed with grudging respect at the glittering citadels of the global village, the flickering images, the limitless possibilities of new technology, the financial big bang. We talked in grand, abstract terms about everything that had gone: 'post-modernism', 'the post-industrial age', 'the post-Cold War era'. We were looking for something new in the New World Order.

The feeling seems to be that if you're a genius at making money then you'll be a genius at running a country.

Maybe when we'd read *Bonfire of the Vanities*, seen *Wall Street* or watched *Serious Money* we imagined that after the stock-market crash of 1987, economic recession and the property slump, surely the nasty little 'Yuppies', the self-styled 'Lords of the Universe', must have gone bust. In fact, the number of dollar billionaires more than doubled between 1987 and 1992.[2] All that really happened was that the big fish ate the smaller fish and the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of super-rich individuals accelerated.

Multinational corporations had been made to look bloated and lumbering in a world of fast-buck footwork. They lost their aura of invulnerability to predatory raiders. 'Leveraged buyouts' by individuals wielding enormous quantities of borrowed cash enriched those who organized them and, more importantly, changed corporate culture. Short-term profits and share prices became the absolute arbiters of corporate policy.

To make themselves leaner and hungrier the corporations invited the predators into the boardroom. Quite extraordinary 'remuneration' packages, share options, performance bonuses, pension rights and other 'incentives' made corporate Chief Executive Officers and their boardroom buddies among the wealthiest people in the world. In terms of disposable income some of them became richer than the billionaires listed in *Fortune* magazine, the in-house journal of the super-rich.

Most striking is the case of Rupert Murdoch, who at one point owed his bankers $8 billion – yes that's eight thousand million dollars. Financial institutions and banks put an almost religious faith in the genius of individual 'entrepreneurs'.[3]

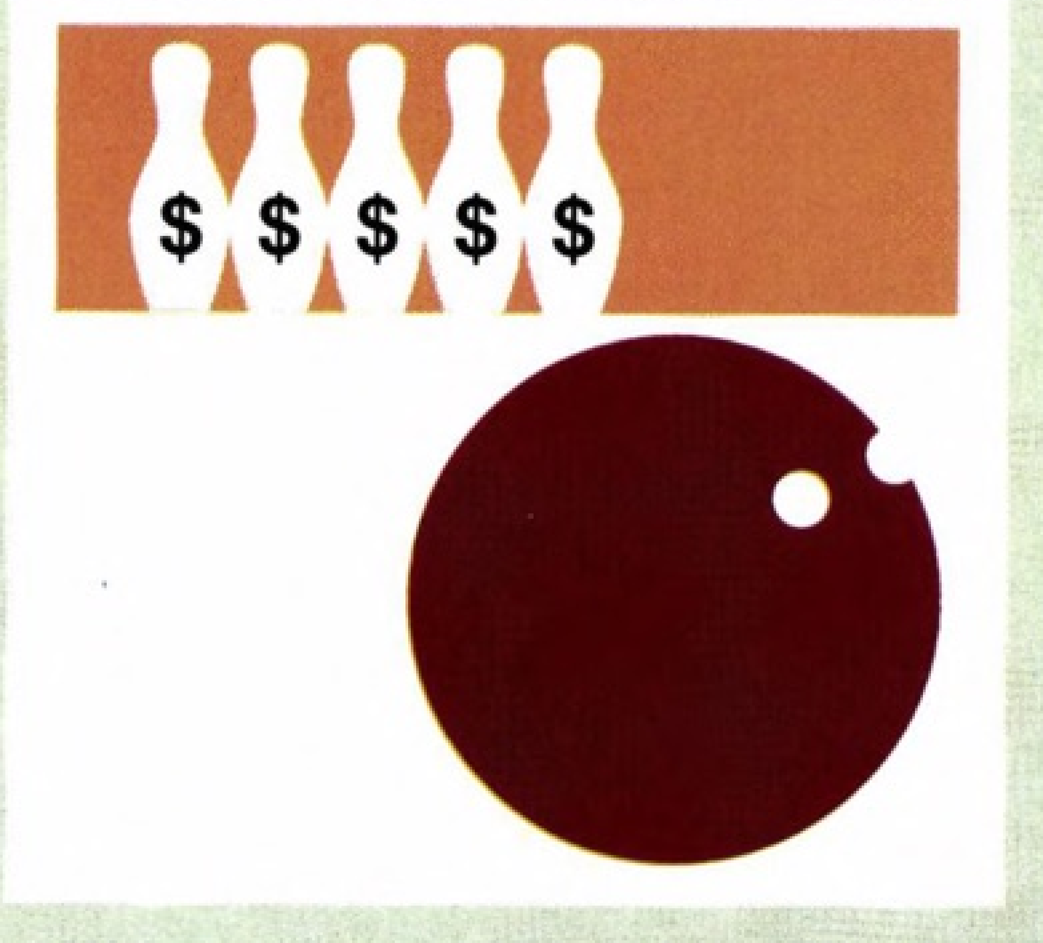
This attitude is now spreading to a wider public. The feeling seems to be that if you're a genius at making money, then you'll be a genius at running a country. The most celebrated example of this is the billionaire property speculator, football impresario, media monopolist and now Premier of Italy Silvio Berlusconi. Large sections of the Italian people, apparently exasperated by venal politicians and unabashed by the prospect of a return to fascism, decided that in the chaotic circumstances of Italian politics they might as well have the real thing and vote for Berlusconi himself.

He had a precursor in Ross Perot, the gadfly billionaire who financed his own campaign in the last US presidential elections. And he will undoubtedly have his successors. There is just too neat a symbiosis, too tempting an investment here for the chance to be missed. Political ambition sits very comfortably with the megalomania of the robber baron. The coffers of the state offer rich pickings – 'privatization' has been a favourite in recent years – while there's no better way of taking out an insurance policy against your personal tax bills than running the government.

In the South we've become accustomed to seeing this sort of thing for some time. Kleptocratic rulers, hugely wealthy men sponsored by their Northern chums, steal

Staying alive

Gambling is big business in Latin America, but membership of the club doesn't come cheap and lasts forever. Riquy Aravena wasn't prepared to pay.



You can put money on practically anything in Latin America – horses, card games, football, the toss of an animal bone plated with gold and silver, the fall of a heavy piece of metal thrown towards a line marked out on the ground.

My own experience with gambling nearly cost me my life.

In Argentina in the 1970s ten-pin bowling was very popular. When I was a teenager I used to go to one of the biggest bowling alleys in Buenos Aires with my friends. About six months after we started we were approached by some smartly-dressed men we'd never seen before.

They invited us to play, just for a few drinks. We won most of the games. One of them asked if we would like to play at another bowling alley. He promised to pay for everything. It was very exciting to think that someone was interested in the way we played.

A few days later they took us to the richer part of Buenos Aires, where most of the people looked very wealthy. All we had to do was to win as many games as we could. At the end of the evening they bought us drinks and paid us as they had promised – a lot of money.

For about two years we lived like kings. We stayed in a hotel paid for by our benefactors. Eventually we felt we'd made enough money and could stop playing.

When we told our patrons that we wanted to quit they offered to double our money. They even offered to provide us with women. The women were told they had to look after us and give us whatever we wanted. But we were getting concerned about what could happen to us. One day I confronted my girlfriend. Why did we have all this money? Why all this protection? Why was even the choice of drinks decided for us?

She couldn't answer straight away, and after a few minutes she started to cry. She tried to explain that I, my friends and the women were pawns for this group of people, the local mafia, and that it no longer mattered what we wanted to do.

It was too late now to get away from them. If we did try we were likely to end up in a side street with a knife in our backs. We were no longer playing just for fun but to stay alive. We belonged to the Mafia and could be bought and sold without any say in our own futures.

One weekend a group of us got together to plan our escape. It was risky and we knew that we wouldn't get a second chance. We weren't even sure we could trust one another not to inform our bosses. One Wednesday we walked out of the hotel just in the clothes we wore and headed for Brazil. I left my friends there and carried on to Colombia, a free man. I'd learnt my lesson.

Parallel lines: wealth dug from the Chuquicamata copper mine in Chile (right) went to build the Guggenheim Museum in New York (left).

OXFORD SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE; CARLOS REYES / ANDES PRESS

taxes, land, loans, export earnings, anything that moves. At one time the 'fight against communism' was sufficient justification. Now we know this for the excuse it always was – at least in Zaire, Côte d'Ivoire, Indonesia, Haiti, Brunei, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and a depressingly large number of other countries with openly kleptocratic rulers.

It is true that in Latin America military kleptocracy has become redundant. Very similar results can now be achieved by 'structural adjustment', which has enormously enriched élites through programmes of privatization, deregulation and cuts in social services. The 35 families in Mexico who 'earn' more than the 15 million poorest Mexicans; the five-billion-dollar swindles of former President Collor and his 'adviser' PC Farias in Brazil are just the most celebrated examples.

In the North, what JK Galbraith calls a 'culture of contentment' may have helped the super-rich to get away with the loot.[4] He reckons the relatively prosperous majority of the population in Europe and North America has not minded too much about the poor minority getting poorer or about a very rich minority getting very much richer, so long as it can stay contented in the middle.

We have also, I think, become bewitched by the rich and famous. We peer at their tedious, self-indulgent 'lifestyles' through banal 'keyhole' TV programmes and magazines with silly names like *Hello!* and *Voilà!* We read about revolting hereditary barons who stuff their heads into bags filled with cocaine; about the 'old' rich and the royals who seem to have been there always and therefore to represent some kind of inherent human condition. We muse about becoming rich ourselves, thinking it harmless. And, while we muse, tax and social wefare cuts in the UK, for example, transfer anything between $30 and $75 billion over our heads from the very poor to the very rich.

In Brazil you'd need to be quite mad not to see such things for what they really are. Here there has arisen in recent years a dystopian vision of strutting media barons feeding exotic soap operas to a society whose abandoned children prowl city streets in a state of glowering fury and tears.

Try thinking of the new robber barons as sufferers from a serious mental disorder of addiction.

A couple of years ago, outside the city of Goiânia, I saw a few beef cattle owned by a very rich landowner strolling through lush fields behind high fences on both sides of a road. Packed onto a grimy, narrow strip along the verges, spilling into the road and clinging to the most tenuous form of life imaginable, were thousands of people. I could not help reflecting that it was they, more than the cattle, who were being farmed. This in a country, and among a people, that have waited in vain for an 'economic miracle' their resources and genius would otherwise quite easily permit. There is only one word for this: plunder.

It is one thing to diagnose the illness, quite another to cure it. Try thinking of the new robber barons as sufferers from a serious mental disorder of addiction. Therapists will tell you that the first step to recovery is for the patient to recognize that he is indeed disordered. The second – which also aids the first – is for everyone else to say so and refuse to collude in the patient's self-deception.

In more urgent and extreme circumstances we could do worse, I suppose, than follow the example of our friends in Chiapas, southern Mexico. They know all too well what their local barons look like and what they stand for. During the uprising there in January they decided to kidnap one of them (he was released unharmed).

The great advantage of keeping the new robber barons in our sights is that there are very few of them indeed and many more of us. It is not envy but contempt we should feel for them. Or are we to believe that profit is the only measure of value; that conspicuous consumption is virtuous; that 'the environment' is a golf course; that it is better to pay tax consultants than taxes; that everything done in the name of democracy and equity is wrong?

If so we should follow the new robber barons into the lunatic asylum and hope someone will be left on the outside to foot the bill. Midas, after all, turned everything he touched into gold, including his own daughter. Better, I say, to rename the Guggenheim Museum 'Chuquicamata'. ■

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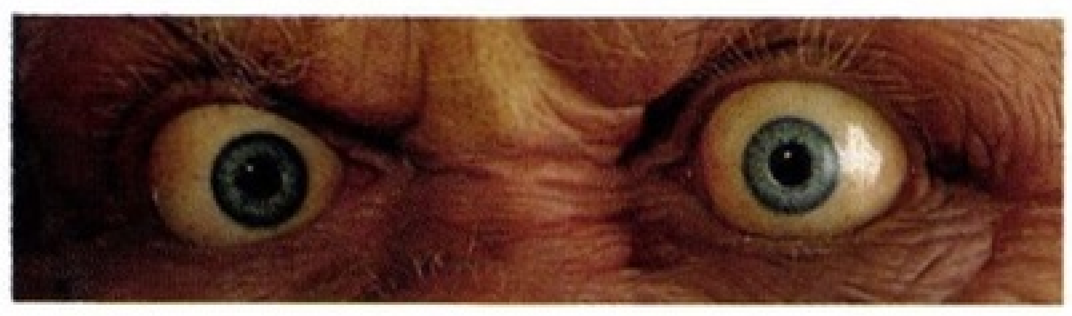
1 This story is based on my research in Chile while working at the London School of Economics between 1970 and 1974. **2** *Fortune International*, 28 June 1993. **3** William Shawcross, *Murdoch*, Pan Books, London, 1993. **4** JK Galbraith, *The Culture of Contentment*, Penguin, London, 1992.

HULTON DEUTSCH

Howard Hughes before the fear of flies set in.

Croesus and the crackpots



Trevor Turner diagnoses the madness of money-mania and prescribes the only effective medicine.

WHEN I was a junior hospital doctor in the mid-1970s a rich man was admitted to my ward. He came to hospital driven by his chauffeur and insisted on a private room. He seemed somewhat bemused by the detailed tests that we carried out. He was in gross heart failure, possibly due to the neglect of the – probably private – doctors he had been attending for some months.

'See you on Monday,' he called out as I left, not understanding that as duty physician I would be on call throughout the weekend until Monday evening at least. Over the weekend he was difficult towards the nurses. Another patient – a dying butcher – and his family wished to use the private room but the rich man refused to move. It took the full magnificence of Matron to get him out of his room even for a few hours.

By the Monday we were exasperated. Our consultant physician had been finding out from more senior colleagues just what would be the right thing to do in such circumstances. 'It's very simple,' he reported back. 'You have to treat the wealthy with utter disdain.' He then proceeded to be extremely rude to our rich patient and got him off the ward without any complaints. The moral is that the wealthy can only despise other people. And so you have to despise them back.

Yet there is no real psychiatric literature on how the minds of the rich work. Terms like 'megalomania' and 'Croesus Syndrome' hint at some kind of psychological understanding but have no diagnostic validity. This is partly because those rich enough to see private psychiatrists also demand *omerta* as part of the deal – silence is golden, at least from the doctor's viewpoint – and partly because money turns people into all sorts of shapes and psyches.

By mere serendipity some case notes from the most expensive private asylum in Victorian Britain have survived. They detail how psychotic plutocrats passed their days, attended to in a plush, hotel-like atmosphere. According to the proprietor, the biggest problem was getting them to do anything at all. He lamented that 'anything in the way of manual labour' was 'against their will'. Even gardening or going for walks were virulently opposed. One spoilt young psychopath required six attendants, domestics and maid servants just to get her dressed and down to breakfast.

Another patient, Lord Frederick H, 'went into the cricket field yet refused to play'. Some inmates did have 'a very decided liking for bicycle polo', which needed 'such skill and direct attention' that their 'mental idiosyncrasies had little scope for action for the time being'.

Family histories were unreliable, since 'with us, mendacity is added in probably greater degree... than is usual in most institutions'. In other words, wealthy lunatics were idle, deceitful and distracted only by the trivial.

If we consider those born rich they seem to come in two major – but not mutually exclusive – versions: the degenerate and the miser. Their mental deficit lies in never having known what it is to want something and not to have it. It is as if they were experimental rats with electrodes implanted in the pleasure lobe of the brain and wired up to a self-stimulating button. All they can do is go on and on having what they want. This is of course the royal road to addiction, to whatever 'clicks' in your personal endorphin system.

Moneyed tastes, whether for private yachts or cocaine or designer jeeps, also have a pervasive quality, leading to their acceptance by the not-so-rich. This can only derive from the semi-mystical and perverse belief that the wealthy somehow know more about pleasure. When there's no limit to your personal desire, monsters cavort through your consciousness and things become stale as soon as they are breathed upon.

A version of this degeneracy can be seen in the life of Howard Hughes. He spent his latter days lying in a specially air-conditioned chamber obsessed with fears of infection, employing round-the-clock shifts of Mormon aides to deal with the threat of random flies coming anywhere near him and – God forbid – depositing their germs even in his atmosphere. As he lay there embalmed in his obsessional ruminations, what did he do with his time? He chose to watch the adventure yarn *Ice Station Zebra* 150 times or more.

As a shrewd reviewer of his life has pointed out: 'The rich are different... because they can pay other people to sustain their nightmares.' Any unchecked obsession will magnify into laughable states of delusion.

Of course, these beliefs are also amenable to straightforward psychiatric treatments, but that would mean accepting that you are psychologically unsound. And who, amongst his minions, was going to tell Howard that he was a crackpot? In a world distorted by narcissism, by the hyper-individualist catechism of 'I want it therefore it is good for me', who is to say anyone is out of their mind?

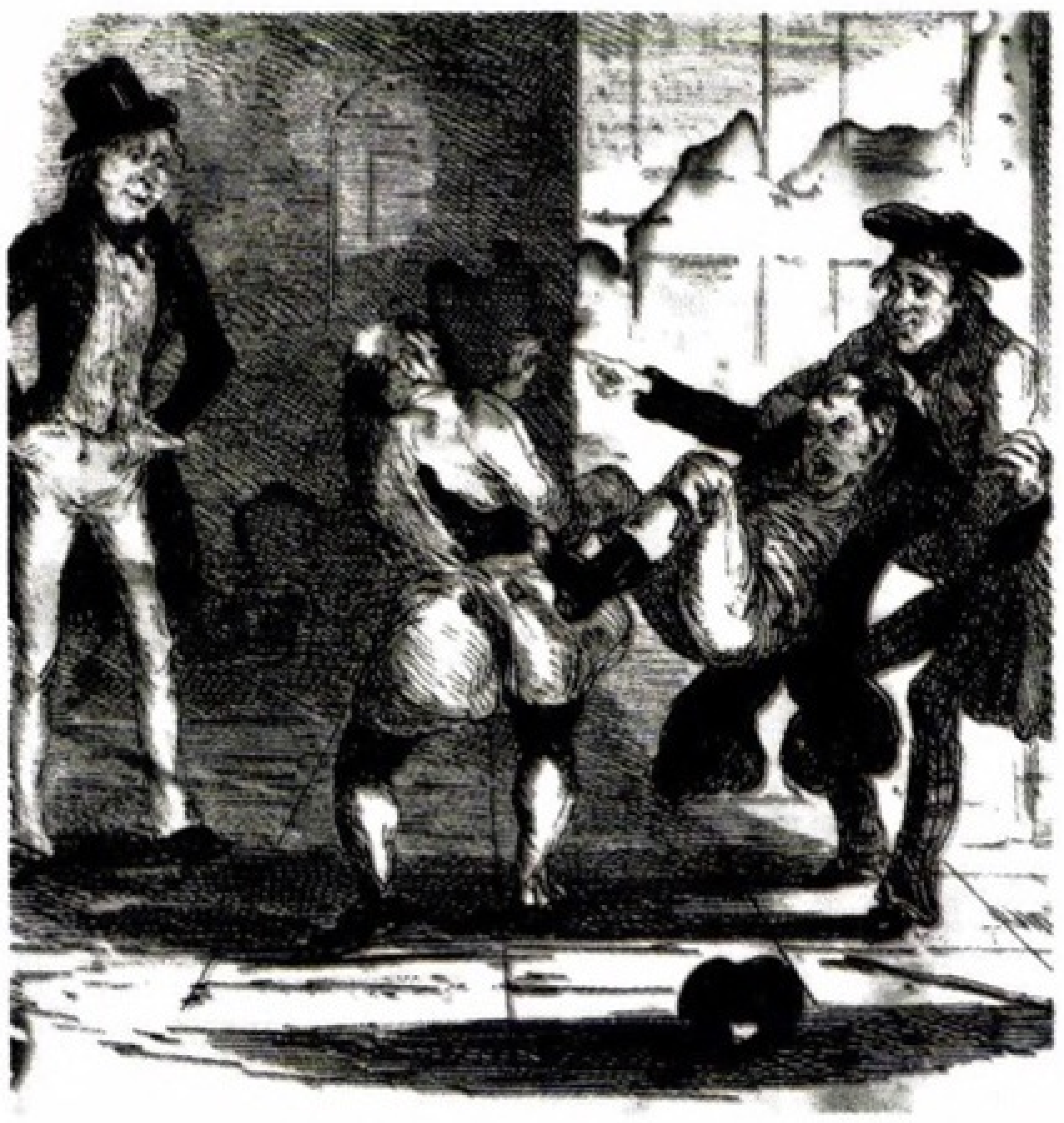
The miser operates with a similar degree of obsession. Whether born miserable or acquiring misery through experience this characteristic is an important mechanism in the process of staying rich. Some of the wealthy have become dominated by the mere process of getting and keeping money. Nothing is allowed to interfere, even though this means performing tasks of astonishing dullness.

The habits and statements of several wealthy men I met in my youth because of my father's work as a banker have haunted me for years. They should have been resonant with wisdom. But the truth only reached me much later via the strange, much-publicized death of Robert Maxwell. For not only was Maxwell rude, overweight and tasteless; there was also an extraordinary nullity in his soul. Like the rich men of my youth he didn't seem to read books, or go fishing, or enjoy exotic hobbies. He simply liked making deals.

Their mental deficit lies in never having known what it is to want something and not to have it.

Maxwell fell off his yacht – it was hired – in suspicious circumstances. But the question is not: 'Did he jump or was he pushed?'. The real question is: what was he doing, all alone save the crew, on a large pleasure boat designed for playboys, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, in pain and in misery? The answer seems to be that he was counting his money – or rather his lack of it – and trying to work out how he could go on keeping all his deals in the air for another few hours.

'Sir, I'm not the lunatic, *that* is the lunatic.'
(From *Sketches in London*, 1840).



HULTON DEUTSCH

Such lives are difficult to imagine, but this does not seem to stop us from fantasizing constantly about our own prospects of wealth. The football pools, a lucky inheritance, the national lottery, they all serve to make worklessness a real possibility. People crossing into such a world are envied, admired and portrayed as having their dreams come true. As a device for warding off social dissent it is as powerful as the medieval church, with its promise of paradise for the faithful.

There is a platitude about money not making you happy, but you don't hear those with money repeating it. The assumption that wealth brings happiness is built into the system and the myth is constantly reinforced by every image that the rich can employ. We may despise our own desire to be rich – we may even work against its processes – but what do we put in its place? There has to be a potential paradise, or we all go mad.

The paradox is that we know excessive wealth will alienate us from our world. We know that it will enable the merest trace of an obsession to grow to monstrous proportions. We know that being able to do anything will make nothing interesting. We know that William Hearst – as factionalized in the film *Citizen Kane* – went stark staring mad, that Onassis's daughter committed suicide, that 'The Great Gatsby' was eternally unhappy, that Elvis died on the toilet, obese and drug-ridden, and that everyone, but everyone, deserted the fabulously-rich Shah of Iran.

Such biographies are morbidly fascinating but cannot counter the insidious, day-to-day propaganda of satisfied people having possessions. Perhaps avarice – a fine old sinful word – is in itself a form of brain disease and such people should be locked away in new asylums for the socially dangerous. They could be joined by that army of wealthy kleptomaniacs who regularly nick the dinner service from Concorde, or towels from the Savoy. The Queen's grandmother, Queen Mary, wife of King George V, regularly stole bits and pieces from her aristocratic hosts when she visited them. They could only grin and bear it, while making sure that the best stuff was hidden away before she arrived.

The psychopathology of the rich still awaits its full exegesis. But whether we decide they are obsessionals, phobics or simply more afraid of dying than most, we should remember that there is only one therapeutic approach. When dealing with the rich always be unutterably rude. To do anything less is to collaborate in their delusional systems and to set back the cause of a sane and social humanity. ■

Dr Trevor Turner is a consultant psychiatrist who works in the East End of London.

NIKOLAI IGNATIEV / NETWORK

Millionaire eye-surgeon Feodorov aims to defend his wealth by collecting antique weapons.

Roubles without rules

The new rich in Russia are spending like there is no tomorrow. ***Olivia Ward*** *reports on a society where flamboyant wealth is viewed with resentment and accompanied by violence.*

It's a tough job being rich in Russia. That's why so many tough people do it. Outside the glittering casinos that have sprung up like mushrooms after heavy rain, hulking bodyguards smoke and pace as their employers drop millions of roubles for an hour's entertainment.

'Money trickles through people's fingers,' says Tanya, a clerk in Moscow's expensive Finnish department store, Stockman's. 'It's nothing for them to come in and throw down a $15,000 fur coat on the cash desk. Perfume, jewelery, Italian handbags, stereo sets – they shop as though it were the last day of their lives.'

Large diamonds are scarce in Moscow jewelery stores, swept up by Russian millionaires decorating their new tall blonde trophy-wives. Henessy can't supply enough of its most expensive cognac 'Paradise' at $300 a bottle. Caviar leaves the shelves as quickly as sausage in the days of empty Soviet state stores. In restaurants where $100 buys a drink and a plate of starters, newly-rich men and women nervously watch others watching them, comparing outfits that scream 'Made in Italy'.

Russia's rich are divided into three categories by sociologist Alexei Levinson of the Russian Centre for Public Opinion and Market Research : the 'puritans' who find moneymaking an intellectual challenge but are reluctant to spend it on themselves; the

'Westerners' who are sophisticated and cosmopolitan in their tastes, and the flamboyant 'merchants' on a perpetual comic-strip spending spree.

Some of the wealthiest acquired their money by channeling Communist Party funds into businesses abroad as the Soviet Union collapsed. Others were heads of Soviet industries who took control of the newly-privatized companies, keeping their grip on money and power. Then there were the creative entrepreneurs who took advantage of lifted trade and travel restrictions to buy and sell their way to success in record time. And all over Russia's sprawling regions super-rich dealers pipeline raw materials out of the country under shady contracts.

The flaunted wealth of the 'merchant' rich creates resentment among the majority who still cannot afford the basics needed for daily living. Highly-educated Russians are infuriated by the salaries wealthy employers pay for jobs that were considered menial in Soviet days. Secretaries, bank clerks and chauffeurs earn $500 to $1,000 a month, while doctors, professors and scientists fight for survival on the equivalent of $100.

'Of course we'd like to move to a larger apartment,' complains a Moscow teacher with two pre-school children. 'But even if we found one we could afford we'd be afraid to move. Every month prices double because the rich are willing to pay any ridiculous sum they're asked.'

In the post-communist economy the top five per cent are pocketing more than 45 per cent of the country's income, while nearly 32 per cent of families are below the poverty line, according to Social Welfare Ministry figures.

Inflation, only partly fuelled by the free-spending habits of the newly-wealthy, has made Moscow one of the world's most expensive cities. And lower-paid Russians can't afford the $2,000-a-month flats, or $100-a-head admission prices to chic new night clubs that are unflinchingly doled out by the 'new Russians'. While most Russians spend their lives queuing to trade up from a squalid apartment, multi-million-dollar housing developments have buyers clamoring before the cement is dry. One rouble billionaire couldn't wait for a new home before installing his Hollywood-style swimming pool. The pool, created on the ninth floor of his apartment in an industrial town on the Volga, burst and flooded the neighbours' flats. Embarrassed, the mogul paid the damages for a complete renovation of the building.

To many Russians raised under communism the market economy is only a theoretical concept. They are deeply suspicious of those who flaunt wealth, and blame those with limitless bankrolls for soaring prices of apartments, cars, imported goods and better food products. A recent Gallup poll in Russia and the US shows that while 62 per cent of Americans think that the country benefits from a growing number of wealthy people, only 29 per cent of Russians agree that they are a national asset. The rich in Russia have a massive image problem.

Slava Zaitsev, fashion designer to the new rich in Russia.

NIKOLAI IGNATIEV / NETWORK

And, Levinson says, they often try to make up for it with a conformity that outdoes the West. 'Once somebody tells them what to do or wear, they follow it to the letter. Not long ago it was advertised that a certain shop sold a brand of tennis racket used by Boris Yeltsin. Next day they were sold out.'

The shock of visible wealth in a society in which conspicuous consumption was until very recently a badge of corruption aggravates the situation. Even the wealthy admit that the lawlessness of many *nouveaux riches* has cast doubt on the emerging market economy.

...all over Russia's sprawling regions super-rich dealers pipeline raw materials out of the country under shady contracts.

For the Russian rich, it appears, there are no rules: a fact that dismays the more discreet members of the wealthy population as much as the poor. Regarded with a mixture of envy and loathing, Russia's newly-monied are a dart board for criminals, political extremists and opportunists hoping to ride on their plush coat tails. In suburban areas near Moscow militias patrol the roadways leading to *dachas* that stand out like huge brick fortresses on a landscape of farmland and rundown wooden cottages.

The rich may well be in need of such protection. Extortion, kidnapping and contract killing are on the rise. And, says Interior Minister Victor Yerin, 'those killings were commissioned after conflicts in financial and commercial activity. Some were revenge killings, others aimed at eliminating competition, while some were based on simple greed – the desire to seize property possessed by somebody else.'

No wealthy or even moderately well-to-do businessman is without at least one bodyguard. Some, like the high-profile lawyer Dmitri Yakubovsky, are generals barking orders at battalions of security forces that follow them doggedly from office to home and even out of the country.

Many insist that the police can't be trusted. And some high-ranking police officials have hinted that they have more sympathy for assassins than for people they feel are tainted by speculative money-making. An industry has been created that employs thousands of ex-police and former paramilitary trainee personnel.

Dmitri Garbarchuk is at the top of the heap. As head of security for the Most

Group banking and commercial company he discreetly eliminates 'unwelcome guests' from his clients' lives. 'We provide a whole range of services,' says the enthusiastic former cop. 'Detectives, security arrangements, bodyguards, logistics.'

In the oil-endowed Siberian region of Tyumen, newly-rich businessmen rattle around the bleak landscape in shiny Mercedes 140s, and industrialists from the Urals trade bags of diamonds and emeralds for extravagant imported goods. Galloping consumption isn't limited to Russian goods. Overseas real estate and yacht-sized foreign cars are status symbols for the recently-rich *biznesmyen* who can't think of anything else to spend money on.

'Taxes alone on a new Rolls Royce amount to $40,000,' says Sergei Berebenya, who greets half-a-dozen prospective buyers every day in the city's most expensive car dealership. His latest sale, a gleaming green Bentley, went to Oleg Bolganov, a 25-year-old Urals tycoon eager to add it to his stable of Rolls Royces.

TOBY LATTA

Berebenya and bargain Bentley on display in Moscow showroom.

Just three years after communist-era travel restrictions were lifted, Moscow's dilapidated Sheremetievo international airport is seething with life. 'You can't take your electric scooter on the plane,' a blonde woman with eyelashes as thick as her ankle-length mink soothes her squalling toddler. 'We'll buy you another in Paris.'

Airlines and travel companies that used to cater for foreigners and privileged Russian officials can hardly keep up with the orders for international flights and cruises. 'It's a madhouse,' sighs one Western agent. 'Russians call at all hours of the day and night demanding instant tickets and visas to Singapore or New York. They think because they have unlimited money they can go whenever they like.'

Even if they do have to wait a few days for their visas, for the time being at least, Russia's newly-rich seem to be having it all their own way – at a price. ■

Olivia Ward is the Moscow bureau chief of *The Toronto Star.*

Trapped crusader

Banker **Alexander Smolensky** is a man with a mission whose one remaining ambition is to stay alive.

'I used to be a specialist in building fences,' says Alexander Smolensky. 'Now I live behind them.'

One of Russia's most successful financiers, the balding, ginger-haired Smolensky is standing uneasily in the courtyard of the smart new corporate branch of Stolichny Bank, a technological wonder whose opening is being celebrated by Moscow's new-money community.

As the bank's president Smolensky should be inside popping champagne corks with the bureaucrats, politicians, priests and journalists eager to get their noses into the drinks and expensive hors d'oeuvres. But he has a twinge of claustrophobia. The lure of a smoky reception room – even a smartly-designed one with sunlight filtering through the bullet-proof glass – is nothing compared with a few rare moments in the open.

The pause is carefully planned. Like all Russian bankers Smolensky is acutely aware that 17 of his colleagues have been gunned down this year by vengeful *mafiyas.* A discreet few paces away is his own defence force including three of Russia's top security strategists, headed by President Mikhail Gorbachev's former security chief. A mountainous young man looms nearby, his jacket stretched tightly over a bulge under his arm.

'Sometimes I can't help it, I deliberately evade them. Then they all go on number one red alert,' Smolensky chuckles, tugging at his cigarette as though to draw out the precious time away from the office.

At 40 he is too ruddy-faced, too thick in the chin and the waist to slip into the mold of the contemporary London banker. But fitness is one of the sacrifices of the hard-working high flyers of Russia's fledgling financial establishment.

Smolensky and man-mountain bodyguard.

'I get up every morning and go straight to the office. I work, work, work. They say bankers do nothing but sit around on bags of money and eat enough for three people, but here it is, two in the afternoon and I haven't had breakfast. By the time I get home from the office it's two in the morning.'

Entertainment of the sort that beckons the wealthy of European capitals is out. 'I can't go to the theatre with my bodyguards. It's too uncomfortable for other people,' he says. The same goes for concerts and art galleries, though he donates money freely to culture and the church.

Banking is his crusade and his business, a mission to 'civilize' Russian business and convert the chaotic frontier market into a replica of the Western system. Like the 19th-century British and American capitalists he has found a *métier* as uncompromising as the Church. Mere living is for other people.

Shopping? 'Never,' Smolensky says with a laugh. 'I haven't been in a store for years. I have limitations on my life. Walking is absolutely excluded.'

The only relaxation, he adds wryly, is behind the well-guarded fence of his country estate. He's seldom there. Weekends he climbs on a plane for Austria to visit his wife Galina and 13-year-old son Nikolai, who live in carefully-maintained obscurity for safety reasons.

It is, he admits, not the life he expected as a young man in the Soviet construction industry. When Gorbachev loosened legal restraints on Industry, Smolensky was one of the first to found a building 'co-operative', the forerunner of a private company.

He lobbied energetically for a new law that would allow co-operatives to set up banks. Now Stolichny is Russia's 13th largest financial institution and possibly the fastest-growing. Isolated from his old friends, immersed in the money-obsessed life of the new rich, Smolensky is on a fast track that stretches as far as the distant shores of Russia.

'My plans for the future?' he asks. 'To stay alive.'

Olivia Ward

GLOBALOPOLY...

SPORTS
NOT GUILTY
CHINA
CHILE
WAR PROFITS
INDIA
GO!
SWISS ACCOUNT
KUWAIT
DO NOT GO TO
JAIL
KOREA
TAX DODGE
PAY 000,000
FLEET STREET
ETHIOPIA
BRAZIL
WALL STREET
$
COMMUNITY CHEST
BOLIVIA
TRICKLE DOWN
Polyp

The richest fifth of the world's population consumes more of the world's wealth than the remaining four-fifths taken together. The champagne-glass diagram illustrates this uneven distribution of income.

RICHEST FIFTH
82.7%

POOREST FIFTH
1.4%

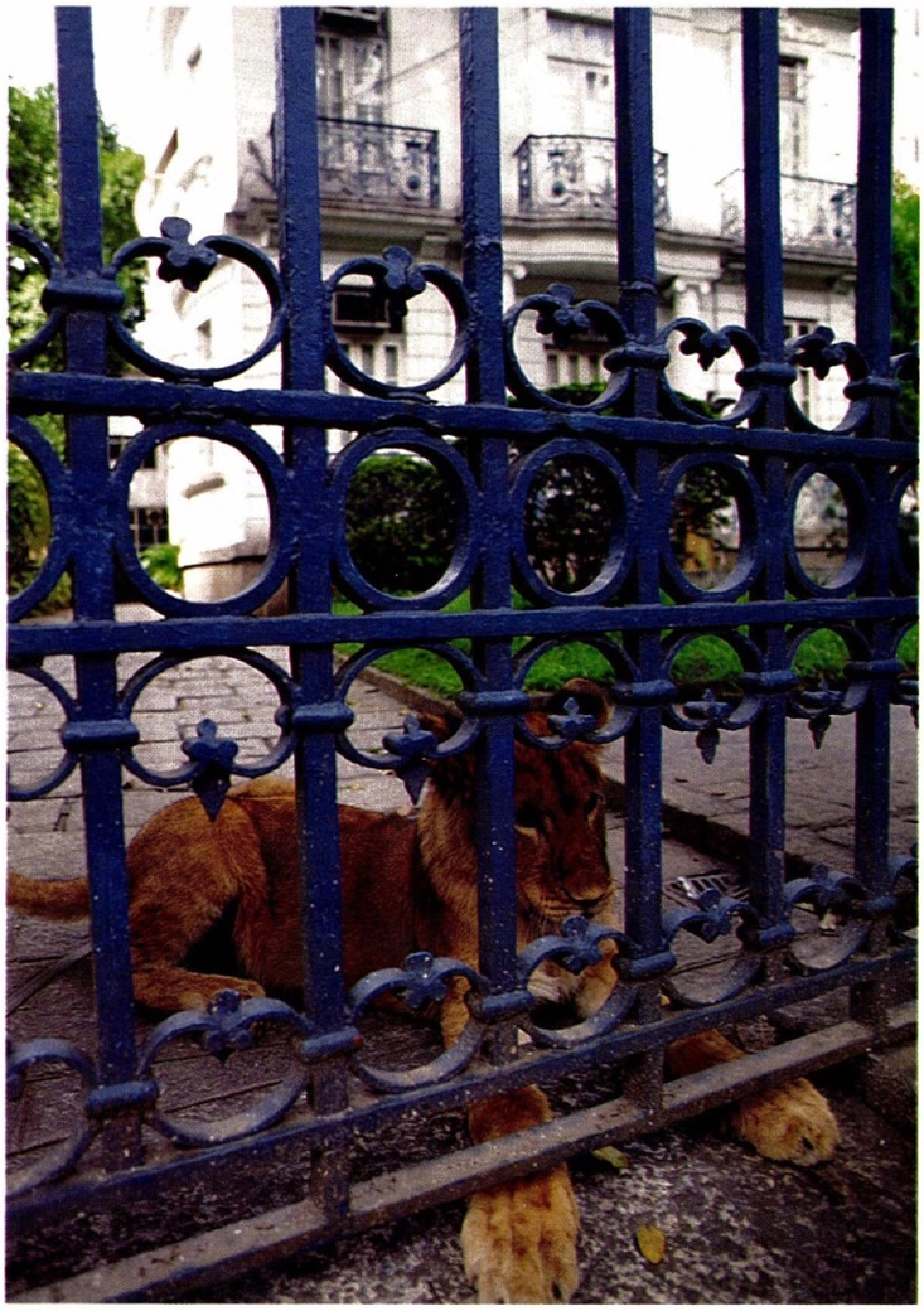
Each horizontal band represents one-fifth of the world's population: the wider it is, the greater the wealth.

DISTRIBUTION OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY 1991

	RICHEST FIFTH	POOREST FIFTH
GROSS NAT. PRODUCT	84%	1.4%
WORLD TRADE	84.2%	0.9%
DOMESTIC SAVINGS	85.5%	0.7%
DOMESTIC INVESTMENT	85%	0.9%

The **pirate privateers**

*The privatization of state industries is in vogue. It frees management from the dead hand of bureaucracy and gives business back to the people. More efficiency, more democracy – what could be better? Urggh... **Dani Sandberg** begs to differ.*



Lioness on the loose: high security for the rich in Rio de Janeiro.

SUSAN I CUNNINGHAM

'We have the impression that our continent is being invaded... It is taking us back two centuries.' So says Gerardo Petrarca, a trade unionist in Argentina. A leading financial consultant in London privately agrees with him. 'The idea that you can take core utilities and sell them on a practically unregulated basis to some group of foreigners to make hay with strikes me as so irresponsible that it is certain to backfire. It's just stupid.'[1]

A tidal wave has been rolling over the boundaries of the state and crushing the influence of democracy almost everywhere for the past 20 years. The result has been what Doug Hellinger of Development GAP in Washington calls the 'greatest ever transfer of public wealth into private hands'.

The wave first formed in Chile after the military coup in 1973, which created a democracy-free 'green-field site' ideal for practical experiments. It spread to the UK under Margaret Thatcher and the US under Ronald Reagan, to Aotearoa/New Zealand, over the Iron Curtain to Eastern Europe and the territory of the former Soviet Union, then on to the Third World. It flattened the remnants of 'public enterprise' and further enriched a tiny, already wealthy international establishment.

By 1992 more than 80 countries around the world had 'privatized' some 6,800 previously state-owned enterprises (SOEs). The majority were not, however, in the rich industrial countries that were promoting privatization and buying most of the assets, but in Eastern Europe and the developing world. In Africa there have been 373 privatizations, compared to just 170 in the rich industrial countries that belong to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).[2]

Many of the SOEs were, in effect, monopoly suppliers of essential public services like water, electricity or telephones. Painful experience has proved that if such services are run by private monopolies they are so unrestrained in their search for profit that they cannot be tolerated in democratic societies. Private monopolies also break the rules of competition in a 'free market'. So for most of this century conventional wisdom was that essential public services must either be run by the state or operated under stringent democratic supervision.

But since the mid-1970s people have somehow been convinced, or simply informed, that if public monopolies are flogged off to form private ones everyone will be better off. Some are. But fabulous earnings by many of the newly-private monopolies were predictably balanced by sharply rising charges to 'customers'. The profiteering process had begun even earlier with the undervaluation of the public assets that were sold off. In the UK British Telecom was undervalued by at least $5 billion and in Argentina the state telephone company ENTEL by some $4 billion, or four times its selling price. This was a pattern repeated over and over again. Taken together, such undervaluations amounted to a massive subsidy to private profit by public donation.

In the UK as in Chile a gloss of 'popular capitalism' was briefly put on public sales, encouraging share ownership among the general public. Because of the undervaluations there were some gains when small, first-time buyers sold their shares, as most of them very quickly did. The bulk of shares ended up in the hands of the financial establishment. 'Popular capitalism' quickly vanished from the vocabulary of privatization.

In Mexico an already extreme concentration of wealth and power was intensified by the process of privatization. A group of some 35 businessmen who already controlled nearly a quarter of Mexico's Gross National Product took a leading part in virtually all the privatizations of public utilities – they were the only people who had the money. Here, as elsewhere in Latin America, shares in the new private monopolies sponsored the growth of stock markets where massive speculative profits could be made – again by those who had the money to start with.

In Chile between 1975 and 1979 most of the local banks were sold for a song to the handful of families that already dominated Chile's finance and industry. So disastrous were the results for Chile's financial 'stability' that a programme of renationalization had to be hurriedly cobbled together. During the second round of privatizations that began in 1985 by far the largest chunk of stock in ENDASA, the electricity utility, was made available to members of the armed forces.

In the 1990s a new and particularly lucrative variation on this theme has emerged. What are called 'debt-for-equity swaps' exchange Third World debt for national assets, particularly in Latin America and especially where state-owned commercial assets can be linked to world markets. Because debtor governments are in a relatively weak position and international banks, backed by the World Bank and the IMF, in a much stronger one, complex currency deals invariably produce knock-down sales of state assets to foreigners.

Something very similar has been going on in Eastern Europe and the territories of the former Soviet Union. Access to Russia's huge natural resources has been gained in bargain-basement deals. In 1990 the Gorbachev Government gave De Beers, who monopolize the world diamond market, an exclusive five-year concession on all Soviet diamond production in exchange for $1 billion in desperately-needed foreign currency. The most conservative estimate put the real value of Russian diamond production during this period at five times this amount.

Manufacturing industry in Africa required a high degree of government involvement to establish. Now these industries are being privatized. In Togo, for example, the World Bank's International Finance Corporation supervised the sale for $9.3 million of two textile mills to a group of US-South Korean investors in 1985. Just one of the mills had cost the state $50 million five years earlier. The Government also gave the new owners a guarantee that no competitors would be tolerated.

Pioneer pirate, dictator Augusto Pinochet of Chile: 'There has never been a dictatorship here. I am a democrat.' (July 1994).

Governments began to act like the agents of private interest, transferring liability for bad debts or failed money-grabbing exercises onto 'their' populations. In Uruguay during the 1980s huge debts incurred by the *frigoríficos*, the meat-packing factories owned by the country's élite, were simply 'taken over' by the military government on the grounds that this was a 'strategic' industry.

Governments began to act like the agents of private interest, transferring liability onto 'their' populations.

Of course not all governments are democratic and SOEs are not necessarily run in the public interest. SOEs, just as much as private monopolies, can indeed be inefficient and operate in the interests of corrupt governments and local élites. When it came to the crunch, few people were willing or able to defend them against the pirate privateers.

Just how completely this process became conventional political wisdom can be glimpsed from Aotearoa/New Zealand, where it was a Labour Government that came to power in 1984 and promised to free the country from the grip of an interventionist 'welfare' state. Within 10 years Aotearoa was being hailed by the OECD, the World Bank and credit-rating agencies as a model for reform world wide.[3]

Labour's Finance Minister, Roger Douglas, devised 'Rogernomics', Aotearoa's more extreme version of 'Reaganomics'. He, together with other key players in the new order, went on to set up consultancies that collected $102.5 million in fees during the asset-sales programme. Consultants from Aotearoa are estimated to have earned between $70 and $100 million from international business during 1992 alone.

The relationship between both Labour and – after 1990 – National Governments and big business began to cause simmering unease. The National Party's Wellington division urged, during a funding drive directed at business in 1992, that 'those who benefit directly from the policies of the Government must be encouraged to support the return of the Government by their donations'.

This process will have to stop when there is nothing left to privatize. Perhaps we shall then be persuaded to buy shares in governments rather than vote for them. What we are left with in the meantime, however, is a return to the nightmare of private monopolies running essential public services. This creates a democratic vacuum with ever-sharper divisions between rich and poor. The question that needs answering urgently now is how this vacuum is to be filled. ■

Dani Sandberg is a writer who has worked as an academic, a teacher and a community activist.

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1 Quoted by Brendan Martin, *In the Public Interest? Privatisation and Public Sector Reform*, Zed Books, London, 1993. **2** *Privatization: the Lessons of Experience*, World Bank, Washington, 1992. **3** Jane Kelsey, *Rolling Back the State: Privatisation and Power in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, Bridget Williams Books, Wellington, 1993.

The art of wasting money

***Martin Fagan** reports on surplus cash and serial buying.*

AT the height of the boom in the late 1980s a share-dealing company in the City of London decided to do something 'special' for Christmas. Awash in profits from selling shares in one of the recently-privatized public utilities, and staffed by erstwhile street-traders decked out in *Wall Street*-style red braces, the firm happened upon a brilliant wheeze.

Rather than fly its entire staff to New York to do their Christmas shopping, fork out for a company pig-out in a hideously expensive restaurant, or even buy each of their dealers a brand-new Porsche, the company decided to go one better. What was needed was a display of company wealth so big, so conspicuous and so absolutely pointless that no-one would be in any doubt that this company was in a league of its own when it came to wasting money.

Picture this: the company drained all the water from its central-heating system and filled it up with... champagne. Not fizzy grape juice or sparkling wine or anything as cheapskate as that. Oh no. They brought in several van-loads of the real stuff, costing over $30 a bottle, uncorked it, poured it into the central-heating system, started the pumps and listened to the sound of evaporating money swilling around their radiators.

Spending a lot of money can be an agonizingly difficult process. Eventually, rich people succumb to what American behavioural psychologists have recently identified as 'consumption fatigue'. There are only so many hours in the day in which to eat, drink, shop and play with the things you've bought already. But the serial-buying habit's a hard one to kick.

Nice try! Don Jaime de Mora Yaragon with his hoard in Marbella.

CHRISTOPHER PILLITZ / NETWORK

Elton John would frequently visit Tower Records in LA and buy 1,000 records at a time. He was also famous for breezing into his record company's office and distributing gifts. Typists would receive Cartier watches and jewellery. Then in 1988, when he had so many possessions that he had to move out of his mansion, he sent them to Christie's, the prestigious auction-house. The catalogue ran to four volumes and cost $60. In four days practically everything he owned went under the hammer, making Elton a cool $20 million in the process. History fails to record what he did with the proceeds.

At Christie's again last year American Mike Malone, President of the Seattle-based music company AIE paid over $150,000 for Elvis Presley's acoustic guitar, an instrument which may have attended at the birth of rock n' roll but, even to the casual onlooker, was clearly unplayable.

Children – as anyone who has any will tell you – can be relied on to soak up an inordinate amount of cash. They are rather like a collection of vintage Aston Martins. When you're stinking rich the confines of your home town may not, however, offer enough scope for your little darlings' spending power. In that case why not charter Concorde, fly to New York and have a stretch-limo ferry you to the Schwartz toy shop on Fifth Avenue? There, if you have a spare $200,000, you can buy your child a bespoke five-minute cartoon movie starring your bundles of joy, based on a script they write themselves. If you need something to keep them occupied while the animators get to work, $15,000 will buy them a scaled-down Ferrari which can barrel along at a top speed of 30 mph.

Most people are hard-pressed to imagine possessing wealth on such a gigantic scale. But Christmas is never far away and soon firms of City brokers will start thinking all over again about how to celebrate in appropriate style. ■

Martin Fagan is a London-based freelance financial journalist who is currently writing his first novel. This is an edited version of an article that first appeared in *The Big Issue,* the newspaper sold by homeless people on the city streets of the UK.

Rebel without a clue

The suicide of millionaire pied piper Kurt Cobain (pictured below) left a whole generation bereft of a false prophet, argues ***Stephen Hill.***

ROCK N' ROLL stars loom large in the psyche of America's youth. The pied pipers of rock have been poets and jesters for each successive generation. The Beatles, the Stones, the Doors, the Who, the Sex Pistols – the gallery of rock n' roll Hall-of-Famers became millionaire heroes, singing anti-establishment songs and mining an inexhaustible vein of teenage angst.

In the 1990s few rock stars reached a higher pinnacle of success than Nirvana's Kurt Cobain. Like so many other rockers, Kurt Cobain became a success by the standards of the establishment he railed against. When on 5 April 1994, at the age of 27 he committed suicide, he effectively abandoned his 15- to 30-year-old fans – known as 'Generation X'. They had come to rely on his furious lyrics, his primal-scream singing and his power-chord slams to express their sense of alienation.

Generation X has a lot to feel alienated about: drive-by shootings, street violence and suicide, Prozac-happy therapy, the haunting specter of AIDS – where an act of love can become an act of death – Beavis-and-Butthead mean-spiritedness, absentee parents trying to make it in the two-income economy. Generation X is the one that will suffer most from present government policies of free trade and from 14 years of Reagan-Bush-Clinton economics. Kurt Cobain wailed, thumped and slammed his guitar against the walls of a decaying society.

I was one of thousands who gathered on 10 April at the Flag Pavilion of the Seattle Center for a memorial to Kurt Cobain. The mood of the crowd was somber. Never have I seen so many stand so quietly at the usually-festive Center.

It occurred to me how much Cobain exemplified the lack of substance rock n' rollers generally offer their fans. Rock stars get great big houses and fancy cars. Cobain's garret was a palatial spread overlooking the sparkling blue waters of Lake Washington. Fans hung out at the bottom of his long driveway or at Tower Records where he sometimes shopped, hoping to catch a bit of his glow.

But though rock stars may promise freedom and hippiness, the rocker usually ends up dead, burnt-out or waltzing off into the sunset with the booty. Rock n' roll has never been able to deliver what it promises. What members of Generation X need is an understanding of why their government is ruining their future in order to enrich the new robber barons.

One of Cobain's lyrics hints at what seems to be rebellion: 'You can't fire me because I quit, throw me in the fire, and I won't throw a fit.' But this is exactly what the corporations want – workers of the world slotted into the role of disposable, carbon-copy units fit for stoking up the fires of the profit machines.

Generation X seems to have little understanding of such matters. MTV (which is owned by communications giant Viacom, which also owns Nickelodeon and Showtime and recently acquired Paramount for a hefty $10 billion) isn't about to tell them, and neither did Kurt Cobain. Cobain's relentlessly self-probing and self-effacing lyrics were about being lost, a loner, a misfit. They were long on angst, short on direction. Cobain was a rebel without a clue, part jester and part pariah. That quality gave his music a certain sweetness and wit rolled up inside the fury. But when the song ends and the primal screaming stops the noose around the neck of Generation X, around us all, is just that little bit tighter.

Cobain has gone but his generation has not. They deserve more substance than Cobain had to offer. They need poets and rockers who are really in rebellion against a corporate structure that's prepared to auction them off on the trading block.

Cobain's suicide note said: 'It's better to burn out than to fade away.' But Generation X has another option – it's called 'fighting back'. It's not as easy as laughing and singing Nirvana songs or throwing toilet paper into the air, like the revelers scaling the Seattle Center fountain after Cobain's memorial. It's not as sexy as orgasms and getting high. It will require more effort than rolling over and playing dead.

The shotgun is pointed at their head. Will they allow the trigger to be pulled or fight back? The world needs you, Generation X. Don't pull a Kurt Cobain. ■

Cobain was a rebel without a clue, part jester and part pariah.

ED SIRRS / RETNA

Steven Hill is a thirtysomething freelance writer living in Seattle.

The **missing billionairess**

***Nikki van der Gaag** wonders why there are so few women among the super-rich.*

COME on then. You've noticed that all the rich are men. So – being sound **NI** readers – you rack your brains for examples of rich women. See how many you can come up with. Not just wealthy women, but really rich ones, super-rich ones, 'robber baronesses'.

OK. I'll make life easier. Queen Elizabeth II. Imelda Marcos and her cupboard of shoes. Cleopatra, perhaps. Hey, but that's all inherited wealth or money-by-marriage. What about rich businesswomen?

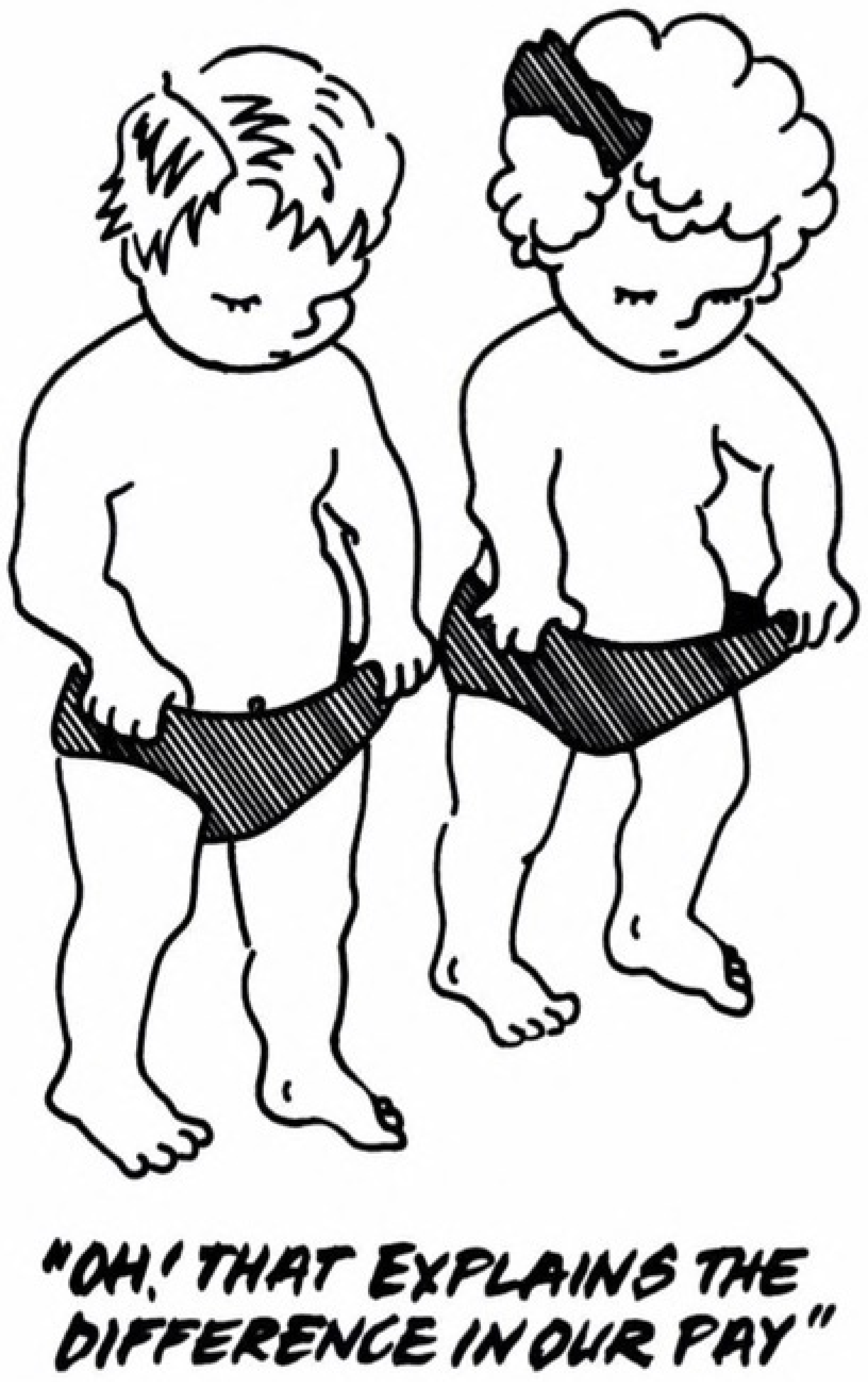
In the UK Anita Roddick who started The Body Shop which sells cruelty-free products made of ingredients like apricot kernels and banana-extract is a millionairess. But she is always in the news because this is so unusual. In the US, Cox Enterprises is owned by Ann Cox Chambers and Barbara Cox Anthony – worth a cool $5.8 billion. Estée Lauder nets $3.4 billion from her cosmetics... In the South? Not one woman from a Third World country is listed among the world's top 101 richest people. To be fair, there are fewer mega-rich men in the South too...

So then we start asking *why?* 'You could write a book on that,' say all my women friends with a wry shrug. That's what I may have to do. There's not an awful lot of books about this around, at least not specifically on the issue of gender and wealth. The spell-checking device on my computer doesn't even recognize the word 'millionairess'.

Some of the reasons are obvious. They are the reasons why women are more generally oppressed in a patriarchal society. Discrimination affects women's access to education and to power-structures. Most of the rich men are not the classic rags-to-riches boys; they were born with silver or gold spoons already in their mouths. Even women born with money are less likely than men to inherit it. Women don't have wives – so they usually have to run a home as well as a business. They can't clinch deals in the brotherly atmosphere of the men's toilet...

Rita Mae Kelly, in her fascinating book *The Gendered Economy* pinpointed three major barriers to womens' success. First, the barriers that women internalize – the belief that they cannot succeed, the lack of role models and the sense that women must be passive rather than active. Secondly, the barrier caused by lack of resources – education, training, networks and domestic support. And finally, structural barriers such as employer bias, inequality of pay or sexual harassment.[1]

While there are few studies on women and wealth *per se,* there are quite a few on women as managers and on women's attitudes to power. Leaving aside those who are rich because their daddies were rich, let us look at women on the way to mega-wealth.


"OH! THAT EXPLAINS THE DIFFERENCE IN OUR PAY"

JO MORRIS / LEEDS POSTCARDS

Modern super-rich men tend to have won their riches outside traditional management structures. Such structures are still likely to be where they started. And it doesn't take long for a woman to come up against the 'glass ceiling' – the level beyond which women cannot go. A study of 76 executive women and 22 higher-level executives – 16 men and 6 women – working in large corporate settings found six major factors in women's success: 'support from above, a strong achievement record, an ambition to succeed, managerial ability, a propensity to take career risks and the capacity to be "tough, decisive and demanding".' The authors concluded that 'in order to approach the highest levels, women are expected to have more strengths and fewer faults than their male counterparts'.[2] Is there any working woman out there for whom that doesn't resonate?

Even if women have become successful in the eyes of the world – and this is a big 'if' – their attitude to their position, and to the power that it gives them, is different from men's. 'Women tend to view power as a means to promote change whereas men view power as a means of having influence over other people.'[3] In other words, rich men are prepared to step on more people's toes to succeed. They have thicker skins and fewer outside responsibilities.

It's undoubtedly a cliché, but perhaps women are also more concerned about people than process, a factor which prevents them exercizing the ruthlessness of male billionaires. In addition, they have not been socialized for success. Heroes are men, not women, as my six-year-old daughter pointed out the other day. 'Why don't girls do any of the *exciting* things in books and films? They have to sit around being rescued and looking pretty. It's not *fair.*' She's right. Though wonderful new stories with girls 'doing exciting things' are being written all the time now, the traditional tales for girls are boring. As a result Rosa spends most of her time playing the Prince, not the Princess.

No 'self-made' rich person is rich unless they have a good dose of ambition. And it is difficult to be ambitious unless you have confidence in yourself and in your ability to operate within the world of work – which is dominated not only by men but by male values. If you are a woman, this may well mean suppressing what you really are in order to appear as you would like to be. This is a difficult – and sometimes damaging – thing to do. So princes do better than princesses, super-heroes better than super-heroines and super-riches better than super-richesses.

Men pay a price for their success though. Many spend all their waking hours accumulating wealth and making deals. They don't go shopping, look after kids, clean their mansions or launder their silk sheets. They don't seem to have much fun, either. Perhaps this too is important. What self-respecting woman can afford to spend 70, 80, 100 hours a week making money? This leaves her no time to get rid of the dosh, so what's the point? She'd rather have time for the really good things of life... ■

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1 *The Gendered Economy: Work, Careers and Success,* by Rita Mae Kelly, Sage Publications, 1991. **2** *Breaking the Glass Ceiling,* by Ann M Morrison, Randall P White and Ellen Van Velson, Addison-Wesley, 1987. **3** *Gender, Bureaucracy and Democracy,* Mary M Hale and Rita Mae Kelly, Greenwood, 1989.

Kick-backs and kleptocracy

ABBAS / MAGNUM

The super-rich are not confined to the North. They infest the South as well. In nearly 30 years of dictatorship Mobutu Sese Seko has reduced Zaire to a state of almost complete chaos – and accumulated an immense personal fortune in the process. ***Steve Askin*** *and* ***Carole Collins*** *show how foreign governments and big business oiled the works.*

CHRIS STEELE-PERKINS / MAGNUM

Predator and prey: Mobutu (above) makes the Zairian people carry the burden of his greed (right).

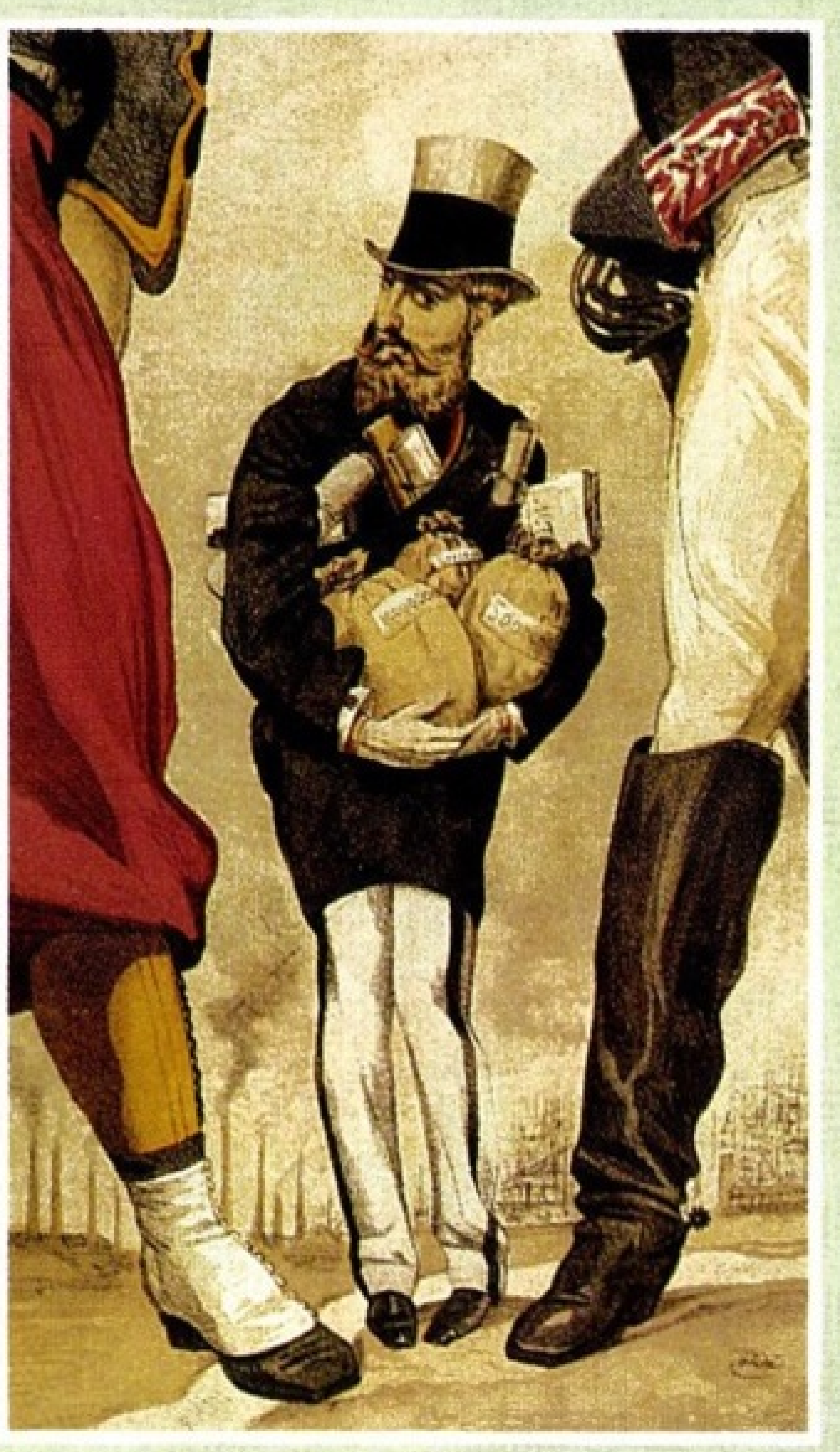
MOBUTU SESE SEKO, Zairian dictator, has spent three decades carefully refining his system for transforming the public resources of Zaire into private wealth, while using bribery, coercion and violence to thwart all movements for change. Anti-Mobutu appeals lead only to frustration, probably because the Zairian leader serves – in the well-chosen words of former US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance – as a 'consistent if sometimes embarrassing source of support' for Western strategic objectives. Zairian fighters for democracy are ruthlessly undercut by the West's continued backing of Mobutu.

The consequences of his system, commonly known as 'kleptocracy' or government by theft, are well known: the immiseration of the people; the destruction of the nation's infrastructure; the enrichment of Mobutu and his cronies; and the transformation of Zaire into the prime staging-ground for foreign intervention against other African nations. The methods are equally clear: diverting military aid, bribing foreign governments and officials, seizing foreign and local assets to augment his own personal wealth, smuggling

Leopold and the loot

The roots of modern kleptocratic practice in Zaire can be traced directly to the Congo Free State, created by King Leopold II of the Belgians as his personal property in the 19th century. Leopold was the first ruler to use profits from this land's vast natural resources to build a personal fortune at the expense of the people.

The secrets of Leopold's system were first unraveled by shipping clerk turned muckraking journalist Edmund Morel. Millions of Congolese were murdered or died from disease and overwork under the forced-labor regime which Leopold used to extract rubber, ivory and other precious commodities.



Leopold bagging the money.

MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY

Leopold, anticipating Mobutu by a century, used an intricate system of double bookkeeping and false trade statistics to conceal the profits from his vast private domain.

As Mobutu was to do decades later, Leopold poured his African earnings into foreign investments and real estate, including a French Riviera estate at Cap Ferrat, just ten miles from one of Mobutu's favorite estates.

The King spent $6 million upgrading his palace at Laeken; at least $3.5 million on other Belgian real estate; millions more for Belgian and French properties purchased secretly through his doctor or his architects; and uncounted additional sums for a dazzling array of investments in Asia, Latin America and the Near East.

He made the Congo one of the world's first 'off shore' money-laundering centers. He used Congo-incorporated companies to quietly pursue business opportunities around the world: railway construction deals in China; fishing rights off Morocco; mines in Greece and the Philippines; and rubber concessions in Bolivia. Economic historians appropriately called Leopold's Congo economic system a *raubwirtschaft*, or 'robbery economy'.

The violence Leopold used to extract his wealth provoked one of the first international human-rights crusades, finally persuading the Belgian Parliament to take the colony out of Leopold's control in 1908. Violence eased.

But the Belgians then systematized the use of forced labor, and enforced cash cropping and coercive taxation to transform the Congolese peasantry into a wage-labor force for Belgian-owned mining and agriculture firms.

By 1950-59, the decade preceding independence, Belgian investments in the Congo enjoyed profits two to three times the domestic Belgian average. The legacy of Leopold was to leave its mark for a long time to come.

Steve Askin and **Carole Collins**

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diamonds... the list is endless, the means: pure theft.

General Mobutu seized power in 1965. His first speeches eloquently decried mismanagement by government functionaries who served only the 'people and companies that pay them bribes'. In fact Mobutu, a one-time Belgian security agent who had shifted his primary allegiance to the CIA around the time of independence, was already the epitome of the abuses he denounced. His first coup, against independence leader Patrice Lumumba in 1960, had been financed by the US Government through the UN.[1] By 1962, according to a UN audit, Mobutu had diverted enough money from foreign military-aid programs to make himself a millionaire.

Foreign bribes were Mobutu's first route to riches. Former US National Security Council official Roger Morris has estimated that Mobutu received close to $150 million from the US in the first decade or so of his rule. In an interview, Morris emphasized that he was referring to 'straight old-fashioned boodle... unaccountable money spent by the CIA'. Mobutu's theft of the $1.4 million he was supposed to pass on to Angolan rebels Jonas Savimbi and Holden Roberto during George Bush's reign as CIA director was merely the best-documented example of a frequent pattern.[2]

After the mid-1970s, however, direct bribes from foreign governments had a declining personal significance for Mobutu. Indeed by the late 1960s he himself was busy buying the allegiance of Western politicians. Belgian officials who received money or lucrative contracts from Mobutu included a former Prime Minister, the one-time leader of the Christian Democratic party and top civil servants in the Foreign Ministry, according to Erwin Blumenthal, who monitored Zairian Central Bank transactions for the International Monetary Fund in the late 1970s.[3] Other reports have documented flows of hundreds of millions of dollars in government contracts to businesses controlled by the family of French President Giscard d'Estaing and to politically-influential Americans.

'Straight old-fashioned boodle... unaccountable money spent by the CIA.'

ROGER MORRIS, FORMER US OFFICIAL

In the late 1960s and early 1970s Mobutu used the seizure of foreign-owned assets to build up his own personal wealth and create a loyal Zairian economic élite. In 1966 he announced the nationalization of Union Minière du Haut Katanga (UMHK), a Belgian-owned firm which dominated the nation's export economy. But a negotiated settlement ultimately granted the Société Générale de Belgique (SGB), UMHK's parent firm, a lucrative contract to manage the state-owned successor, Gécamines. According to a close Mobutu associate, UMHK would secretly kick back a portion of the royalties directly to the Zairian ruler.[4]

The next major cycle of expropriation was the 'Zairianization' campaign launched in November 1973. In its various phases, Zairianization redistributed shops, plantations, transport companies and other enterprises from European owners to Zairians. Mobutu created a personal conglomerate which controlled one-fourth of Zairian cocoa and rubber production as well as large chunks of other key crops.

Corporations, like foreign governments, found that providing Mobutu with a chance to earn money facilitated desired transactions. In one especially Byzantine deal the Mobutu Government signed several agreements with a mysterious German firm known as Orbital Transport Und Raketen Gesellschaft (OTRAG) in the 1970s. Mobutu pocketed $50 million in commissions paid by OTRAG during the two years in which it leased effective sovereignty over 29,000 square miles of Zaire's Shaba province for a missile-testing scheme.

The Zairian State Treasury itself has provided Mobutu with his most reliable and consistent source of funds. Confidential studies by the World Bank and the IMF contain a wealth of information on this subject. The authors obtained several of the key studies from officials who were distressed by their institutions' complicity in the concealment of Mobutu's abuses. His presidential allowance, the annual *dotation présidentielle*, regularly consumed 15 to 20 per cent of the Government's operating budget and 30 to 50 per cent of its capital budget. In 1988 this fund totalled $65 million for the year. In 1986 the Presidency and related institutions drew $172 million from the treasury, three times their official allocation.

Hundreds of millions of dollars have disappeared annually from the state treasury without even an indication of how, when or why the funds were taken. A 1989 World Bank study showed that fully 18 per cent of the year's state expenditures went on unexplained 'other goods and services'; in 1986 these absorbed $269 million. According to World Bank experts who have examined Zairian state financial records, much of this money appears to have been spent on luxury purchases or superfluous military hardware.

Embezzlement of export proceeds may now be the most lucrative 'pillar' of Mobutu's system. Over the past dozen years repeated studies by the World Bank and other institutions have documented diversions of $150 million to $400 million a year from the nation's copper and cobalt revenues. The upheavals of the past four years cut copper and cobalt production to perhaps one-tenth of historic levels. Diamond smuggling has now become the main source of foreign earnings for Mobutu and his associates. In 1992 alone this may have netted as much as $300 million.

Western governments and multilateral institutions have known at least since the mid-1970s that money lent to the Mobutu regime was likely to disappear without explanation. In some cases loan proceeds were directly stolen, in others they were squandered on projects which enriched no-one except Mobutu or a few politically-favored foreign investors. Former *Wall Street Journal* reporter Jonathan Kwitny rightly concluded that almost none of Zaire's foreign debt 'arises from anything that much benefited the Zairian people, who are being slowly starved to pay it off'. Zaire's accumulated foreign debt has soared to $10 billion.

Mobutu's 20-year friendship with former President Bush insulated him from effective outside pressure.

Western governments, fully aware of the abuses, continued to deliver foreign aid grants and concessional loans as direct pay-offs for Mobutu's political services. In 1983, after Zaire sent troops to defend US-backed Chadian President Hissen Habre, President Reagan praised Mobutu's 'courageous action'. A few months earlier the US Embassy in Kinshasa had warned Washington that any monitoring of expenditures was impossible because 'major diversions of funds and goods are made by the barons of the regime'.

By the time that the West African wave of democratic protest swept across Zaire in early 1990, Mobutu's most important backer, the US, was far from ready to abandon him. A May 1990 massacre at the University of Lubumbashi brought swift protests from two of Mobutu's three most important foreign backers, France and Belgium. But Mobutu's 20-year friendship with former President George Bush insulated him from effective outside pressure.

A pro-democracy movement flowered despite murderous repression and international isolation. Yet Mobutu shrewdly rode the wave of protest, as he does to this day. He offers minor reforms followed by major disreforms, buys the support of some oppositionists and sends troops to kill or threaten others.

Soon after President Clinton took office State Department officials started talking with their French and Belgian counterparts about a possible freeze on Mobutu's foreign assets. They are still talking. ■

Steve Askin – whose writing on Zaire has appeared in *Business Week*, the *Christian Science Monitor, The Observer* and elsewhere – and **Carole Collins** are overdue on their long-promised book about the Mobutu kleptocracy. This article is adapted from the *Review of African Political Economy No 57:72-85.*

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[1] Carole Collins, *Africa Today*, 3rd Quarter, 1992. [2] John Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies: a CIA Story*, WW Norton, New York, 1978. [3] E Blumenthal, *Zaire: rapport sur sa credibilité financière internationale*, 7 April 1982. [4] *Africa Now*, March 1982.

Paying it back

The money Mobutu borrowed or stole is owed to the people of Zaire and must be repaid to them. Well-designed sanctions may offer the last chance of removing this corrupt ruler before Zaire collapses into fully-fledged civil war.

The proposals outlined here lack precedent in the history of international economic sanctions. Yet nothing less will work. The isolation of Mobutu should be coupled with efforts to strengthen Zaire's pro-democracy movement.

URGENT ACTION SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

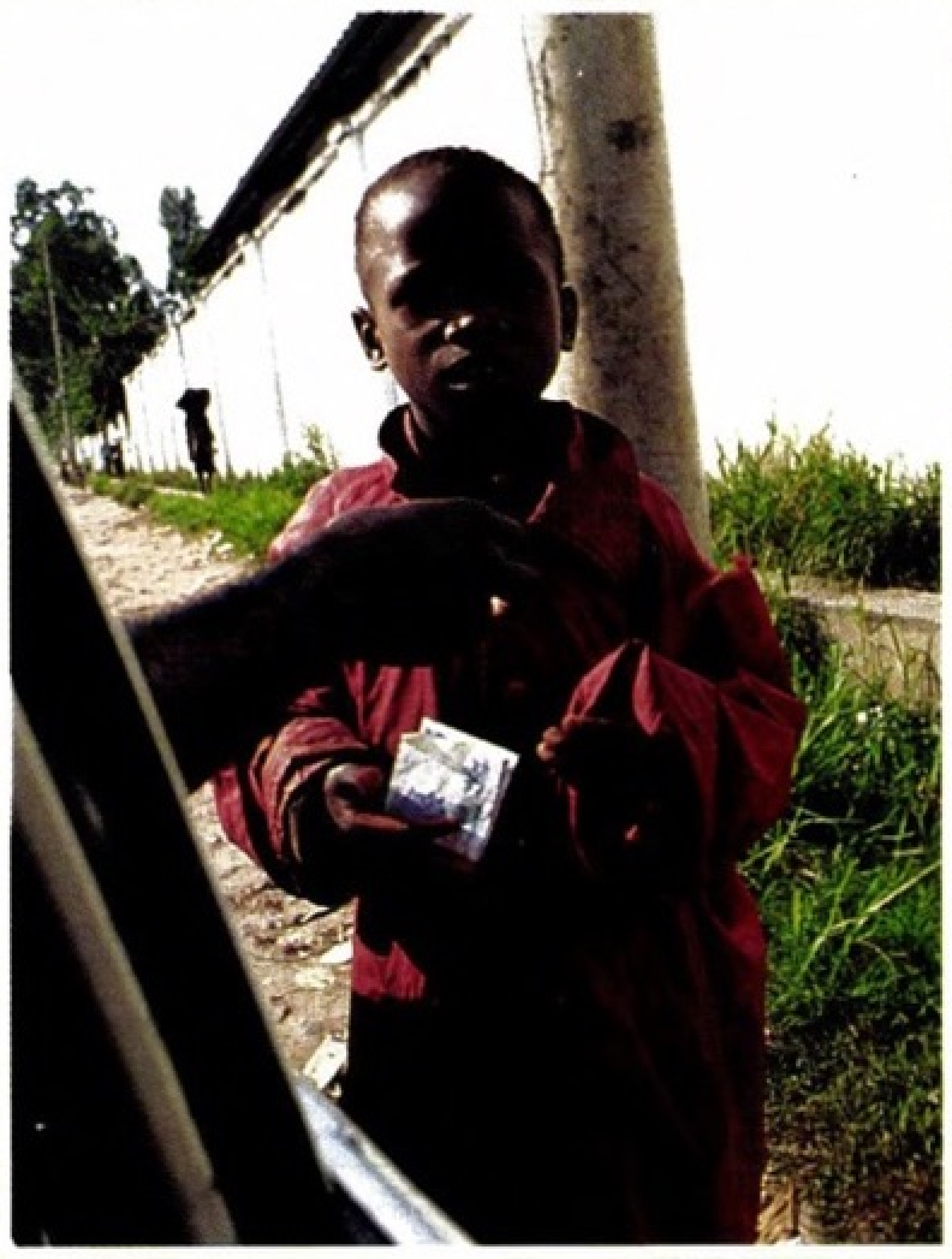
● **Freezing the foreign bank accounts of Mobutu, his family and his associates.** A freeze limited to Mobutu's personal bank accounts would be useless, because much of his foreign wealth is hidden behind the names of family members, friends and political cronies who must also be targeted. To be effective a freeze must also encompass real-estate holdings; equity interests in resorts and other business ventures; safe deposit boxes full of diamonds; and a host of other assets.

● **Formally suspending Zaire from the IMF and World Bank.** This should proceed immediately.

● **An embargo on Zaire's exports.** Because Mobutu's destructive regime has already driven the copper and cobalt mines to a virtual standstill, diamonds are the most important target for any embargo. Embargoing diamonds is extremely difficult, since any smuggler can carry several hundred thousand dollars' worth in his or her pocket. Nonetheless, authorities in Antwerp, Tel Aviv, New York and other major diamond-cutting centers would – if determined to do so – have relatively little difficulty pinpointing the major buyers and sellers of Zairian precious stones. If an embargo were coupled with close observation of Mobutu's customers and harsh prosecution when violators are caught, they will quickly turn to other diamond sources.

● **Banning weapons sales to the Mobutu regime.** An arms embargo is symbolically important but has relatively little practical meaning because Mobutu's power rests on weapons already in-country. Mobutu controls the soldiers only to the extent that he pays their salaries.

● **Expelling Mobutu's ambassadors from Western capitals.** Mobutu's last presidential term expired in 1991. While the US and the European Community have repeatedly declared that they view the High Commission for the Revolution as Zaire's legitimate highest authority, this stance has not yet been consistently translated into policy.



ELI REED / MAGNUM

Steve Askin and **Carole Collins**

The final deal

He did not care to recall what he'd done or who he'd done it to, but fly-and-grab corporate ram-raider Frank Parker's past was about to catch up with him. ***George Fisher*** *was in Sydney, Australia, to witness it.*

FRANK PARKER's wrist bore a Tag Heuer sportswatch – chunky, muscular but elegant in a neo-colonial fashion. It reminded him of his more athletic past. It reminded him of the women who had unclasped it for him when he needed less restraint. It never reminded him of the time. There was a team of executive secretaries to do that.

The only sound in the boardroom was the soothing breath of the air-conditioning. Outside it was hot, the late-summer sun glistening on Opera House, sails, harbour. Briefly he thought of Chardonnay and his shaded pool.

One-by-one the room filled, crisp power-dressed executives settled into their seats like scum around a bathtub. Within an hour they would leave, two-by-two, their collars soaked in sweat, their shirt-backs seeping blood from knife wounds.

Parker's own shirts rarely oozed blood. His evolutionary motto was: 'The Survival of the Fastest'. He had developed this approach over the course of a decade of corporate take-overs around the world. He had also developed the habit of keeping his own freshly-laundered suits hanging in permanently-booked hotel rooms in the major financial cities, ready to step into on his fly-and-grab raids.

Parker paced the briefing room next door. 'What's the game on this one?'

'They're scared of a big sell-off,' said Drystone. 'Offer them safety after two years but a rough ride in-between. Suggest a big rise for the directors after six months.'

Parker kept staring straight ahead. 'The downside?'

'Possibly a $20-million loss after year one. For us, a bit of exposure. But we can offload on the Arabs if things get jerky.'

'I should talk rough not smooth.'

'Right. Coat off as soon as you sit down. And roll up your sleeves after 10 minutes,' said Drystone.

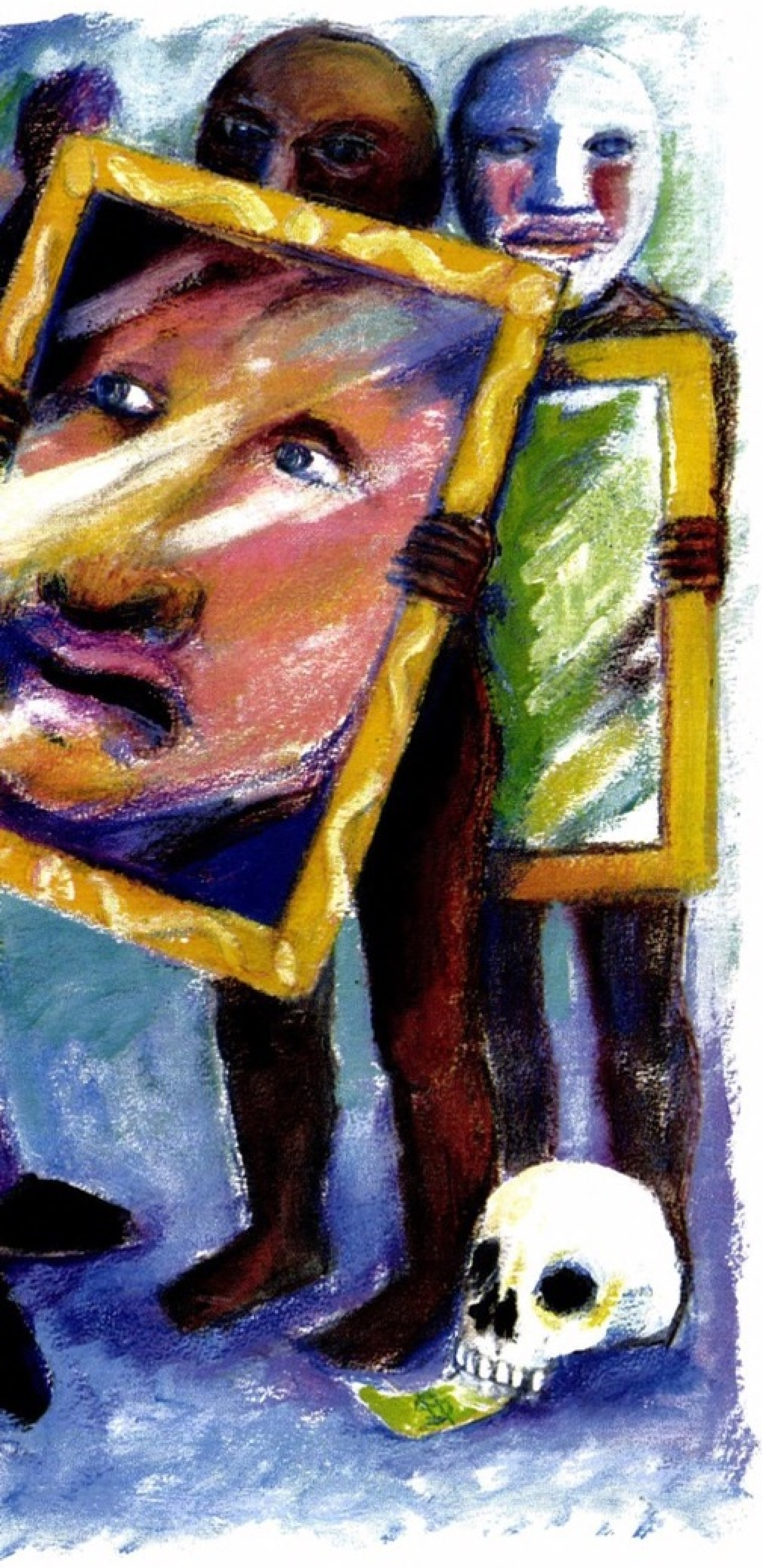
'So. The local producers will have to lift their game and drop their costs. No worries.' Parker wiped his hands over his tanned but slightly flushed face. 'I'll have them on toast.'

Drystone, he could trust Drystone. He was one of the mates. 'Mates' for Parker meant 'useful'. Those who were not useful didn't rate a nod. But Drystone was useful. He was a financial whiz, a blender and juicer. He played the foreign-exchange and futures markets like waterpolo. In recent years he had become one of the most successful traders in foreign debt. With his rancid smile he could make seven figures almost twice-weekly for the corporation, buying and selling the hopes and losses of struggling nations like pawned watches. Each keystroke on his computer could cost a poor nation an extra two or three years' interest payment. Drystone was useful.

Parker walked into the boardroom and stood before the sacrificial altar. On the wall opposite was an oil painting of a pristine coastal stream, long since decimated by open-caste mining – a detail that never worried him. He glanced at the painting, thought of tax deductions, shelf companies, offshore investment. Yes, the coast.

Parker's concern for the life of the planet had so far been restricted to bulls and bears in their stockmarket manifestations. Bears he had never seen, but felt a deep animosity to them for their links to the old Soviet empire, all the blasphemies that the word entailed. Bulls gave him rounder pleasure. They reminded him of his physique and pastoral pleasures.

More tangibly, one of the largest tracts of grazing land in the world was owned by his consortium. Before it was cleared the land had been 'waste forest, full of monkeys and squawking birds', according to his man on the scene. The new beef ranch in



Argentina was a financial windfall, even pulling in some government aid for its troubles.

'Men,' said Parker – women made it to his boardroom only as honorary men –'let's stop being polite. You're wankers if you think you can do better. This is my final offer.'

And then he froze.

A huge, invisible hand squeezed his chest, crushed him without effort. He sank back into his chair. He wheezed. Voices faded around him. Someone made a clumsy attempt at resuscitation.

In a strange passage of time, possibly five minutes, possibly two hours, Parker became aware of the jolts of the ambulance, the professional grimaces of the paramedics. He could afford the best medical treatment in the world. He need not worry.

Then, once more, came the crushing grip on his chest. Amid the tubes and masks spread a crystal light, weightless and without shadows. He was floating.

He thought he saw himself lying on a white bed. He was looking into a grooming mirror held by a young Malaysian girl.

'Mr Parker?'

'Ye... Yes...'

'You do not look well, Mr Parker. And you do not remember me. I never met you face-to-face. My family farmed a small hillside for many years until you ordered the trees to be felled for woodchip,' she said without emotion.

'You were all given compensation. Some of you did very well,' said Parker, bemused by the apparition.

'In our one small village, Mr Parker, in the first year seven people died from illness and lack of food. Your company gave us a pittance. Our livelihood was taken from us, and so too our dignity. The only men to have gained – your agents – now live like kings far away from the clearings...'

Her voice trailed off and Parker began to breathe, although he could not recall having stopped. The sunshine was dulled by the ambulance windows, a sweet smell of jasmine drowned by disinfectants. His parent company had made a clear $12 million on that deal, with a minimum of fuss. He'd pocketed almost $2 million himself, plus a few bonuses...

His image again. His pallor in stark relief. The frame of the mirrors swaying.

An old man, maybe Filipino. 'Mr Parker? Mr Parker?'

'Shut up.'

'Mr Parker, you do not look well. But I must tell you. My wife and two children are now dead. My daughter is still with me, but she will not live long,' said the man.

'Yeah, and it's all my fault. Now get out!'

'I will leave soon enough... Do you remember my face? I was the 'resettled native' in your glossy annual report. But you never asked me. You never gave any of us a choice when you decided the dam would be built for hydro-power. The slums we were forced into were weeping sores on the city. Our blood was the rain that had to fall so that your profits could rise...'

His voice, too, faded into the sound of the ambulance pumping through city traffic. Parker felt angry, but also stronger. He snapped back into sharper consciousness and swore at what might have been a pang of guilt. Before the paramedics could restrain him he jerked bolt upright on the stretcher and shouted something unintelligible at what he took for a Reuters' screen of foreign-currency values. The paramedics lowered him firmly, tightened a restraining strap.

Though the journey barely lasted 10 minutes Parker was visited by a long line of mirror-bearers. Each one struggled to be seen behind the reflection of Parker's own pallid face, which grimaced more intensely each time. Process workers in Central America and Taiwan; labourers in southern India; Kooris from tribal lands in the Australian outback. Parker used every fibre of his remaining strength to keep them roped off from his mind.

He felt stronger, he rallied, he made a unilateral declaration of innocence. He stood before a towering waterfall which thundered into a jagged canyon. One-by-one he threw the mirrors over, each with an etched portrait of himself in the glass. He felt robust, powerful. He would not compromise.

The ambulance entered the hospital gates and pulled up at the casualty dock. Its rear doors were unlatched and the daylight poured in with the sound of a distant car alarm, a conversation held low out of respect for lives torn open.

Parker discarded the last of the gilt-edged mirrors. He would take a fortnight off work. He might take a couple of days' rest and then resume his power-walking fitness regime. He would eat fewer prawns, drink less wine, maybe stop seeing Lisa and Karen, buy his wife more jewellery. He would be fine.

For the first time that afternoon he truly relaxed – and the fist returned. It seemed to push through his chest as if splitting the earth. The pain was immense and he fell. He staggered to his feet at the base of the waterfall. His ears filled with sounds of life support, the technology of denial. Medical staff shouted. Scraping, scraping inside his mind.

The clanging, metallic sounds faded into the squawking of a small bird, shrill in apparent agony. The sunlight was cold grey but its rays stung like wasps. The mirrors were all intact. The memories too. But the reflections, ghost-like, became statues of himself, caricatures of his worst moments, his cost to others. Each statue in turn beckoned with outstretched arm then withered as he approached.

He was sobbing now, inconsolable as a child. The statues motioned then turned in formation, each setting its eyes on him without warmth or life, each at arm's length, marbled reminders of bitterness and gall. And in the utter loneliness of that moment Parker felt the warmth drain from his own flesh, a rapid acceleration of paleness.

The world floated. The wrenching pain in his chest didn't ease. Piercing truth opened before him not the future but his past. One-by-one the memories he had cherished cracked and faded like a bleached billboard. One-by-one his joys were putrefied by selfishness and greed, regressing until all his years were disfigured.

Parker's widow inherited the corporation. She died penniless. ■

ILLUSTRATION: WENDY HOILE

George Fisher is a writer who works with the **NI** in Australia.

GYENES / CAMERA PRESS

Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos maintained their lifestyle through networks of bankers and cronies.

Odious debts

Steve Askin looks at some fresh thinking about how the proceeds of kleptocracy can be recovered.

THOUGH Leopold of the Belgians invented modern kleptocracy and Mobutu perfected the crime, it is hardly unique to Zaire.

Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somosa was rumoured to have exported at least $500 million before his overthrow in 1979. Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia had perhaps $15 billion in foreign assets. Other illustrious kleptocrats included 'Papa Doc' and 'Baby Doc' Duvalier of Haiti, the Shah of Iran, Alfredo Stroessner of Paraguay and Nicolae Ceausescu of Romania.

In every case a worldwide network aided the criminals and profited from their crimes. Commercial banks, backed by government guarantees, made imprudent loans which often ended up as deposits in their own vaults, to be paid back by impoverished taxpayers.

Some successor governments have tried to use the law to recapture the money. The clearest case is the Philippines. The Aquino Government established a Presidential Commission on Good Government to recover between $5 and $10 billion from the assets of former dictator Ferdinand Marcos and his associates. The Philippine authorities located just $1 billion and recovered just a tiny fraction of that in exchange for immunity from prosecution for those responsible. Marcos's wife Imelda and alleged co-conspirator Adnan Khashoggi were acquitted in 1990 of racketeering in New York.

Swiss banks, with their code of secrecy, are at the centre of the system. Soon after the fall of Marcos in the Philippines they appeared to be about to break precedent and froze several hundred million dollars of his assets. Similar action was being prepared for the accounts of other former rulers. The Los Angeles Times even ran a headline: 'EX-DESPOTS CAN'T BANK ON THE SWISS'. But in the event Swiss courts placed insurmountable obstacles in front of every effort actually to get hold of the money.

Despite this, a post-Mobutu government in Zaire will have a uniquely strong case to make – because the documentation of foreign complicity is so strong – if it decides to challenge Mobutu-era debts.

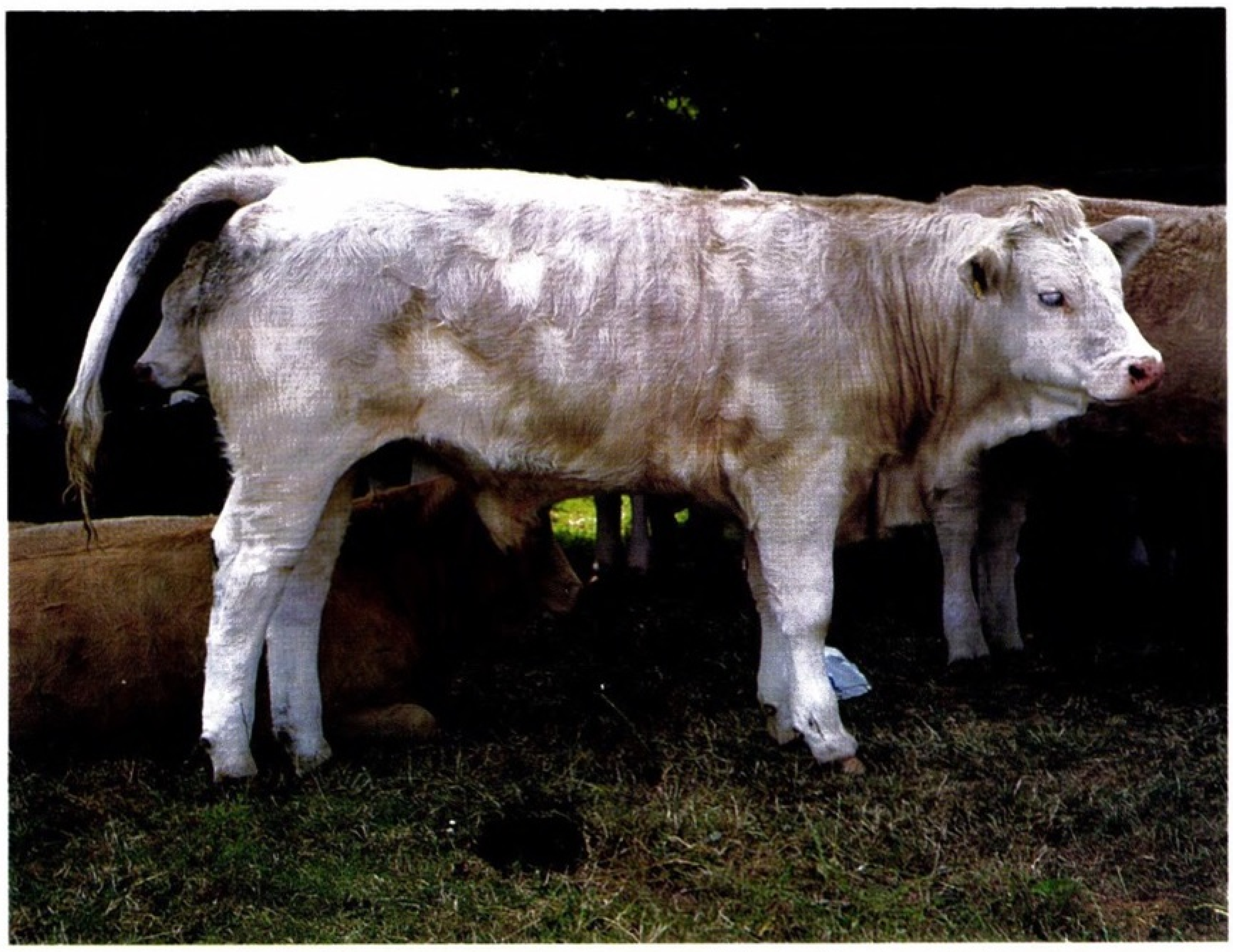
Because previous international efforts have failed, experts are developing new legal theories for challenging kleptocrats, their cronies and their bankers. Ghanaian legal scholar Chris Mensah argues that 'odious' debts arising from corrupt collaboration between Southern dictators and Northern lenders are inherently illegitimate and uncollectable. Lenders are guilty of fraud, he argues, if they disburse to rulers when there is reason to believe that they will steal the proceeds.

NN Susungi, London Resident Director of the African Development Bank argued at a conference in 1993 that 'it is morally unfair for the strong and powerful institutions to continue to demand unbearable economic sacrifices from the poor'. The banks, he argued, have a duty to help successor governments locate stolen wealth to pay off debts.

Even if they did, it would not mean that the money would then be used for the benefit of those who really need it. A financial system stacked against the poor will not be shaken until a movement can be mobilized – in rich countries as well as poor – to make the kleptocrats and their bankers pay the real price of their deeds. ■

Steve Askin holds a masters degree in Business Administration from Colombia University.

TOXIC WASTE



NIKKI VAN DER GAAG

Beef machines in the West produce toxic waste filled with chemicals.

Dumping dung

Dutch exports raise alarm in Gujarat

An unsavoury controversy is rapidly building up over the proposed import to India of around seven million tons of cowdung from Holland. Environmental activists in India have called this move one of the most stupid and dangerous results of the new liberalization regime dictated by the World Bank and IMF.

Most Western countries feed their livestock on chemical nutrients including growth enzymes. The continuous and reckless use of chemicals to feed livestock has resulted in many of the micro-organisms present in the dung becoming resistant. It is feared that if the strains of such mutants get into India the consequences will be dangerous.

Consumerist Western society wants to turn its livestock into bulky beef-machines with little concern for the environment. In contrast cattle-rearing in India is based on vegetarian fodder and closely linked to the country's social and agricultural setting.

Adequate sanitary inspection and certification of such enormous quantities of dung may be next to impossible. Large concentrations of dung can contaminate groundwater aquifers and produce global-warming gases like methane.

There is no denying that India has a shortage of manure. According to a recent estimate some 70 to 80 million tonnes of dung are burnt each year as fuel in rural areas, depriving the fields and farms of organically-rich manure. Stocks of Dutch dung would be brought by containers from Rotterdam to Kandla harbour in Gujarat state on the western coast of India. Once unloaded it would be sent to different parts of the country to be dried and sold to farmers as manure. Recent press reports say a Madras-based company is planning a dung and fertilizer deal with the Dutch company Seaswan BV.

According to Mr Kisan Mehta, President of the Save Bombay Committee, the Dutch are selling off the dung at less than the cost of transport not out of any sense of altruism but to preserve their own environment. 'This is a clever case of developed countries using normal trade channels to dump dangerous wastes in developing countries on the strength of their money power,' says Mehta. 'The port where this stinking dung containing dangerous chemicals and drugs will be unloaded will become the target of pests. It will become impossible to control malaria and prevent other epidemics breaking out there.'

The Basel Convention on the transport of hazardous wastes forbids dumping. Greenpeace maintains that rich countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) account for 96 per cent of toxic waste and are raking in large profits from sending it to Asia. A recent international conference in New Delhi on environmental and human health called for a total ban on the trade in toxic and hazardous materials – including dung of this kind. ■

Radhakrishna Rao

War vacation

War nostalgia is being exploited in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, where bars with names like *Apocalypse Now* and *Good Morning Vietnam* are flourishing. Trang Cong Cuong is head of the Da Nang Tourism company. In 1965 he fought against the Americans. Now he is welcoming former American servicemen returning to the town. His company plans to organize trips to old battlefields for American veterans.

The Economist, Vol 331, No 7867

Not cricket

The latest in a series of bitter disputes over tourist developments in Indonesia is the proposed building of a 120-hectare golfing and hotel resort on Bali which will engulf several Hindu holy sites. Resistance is coming from farmers, students and religious groups. Farmers in the area claim that government officials have forced them to hand over land for the development by shutting off irrigation to their fields. In future, the water will be diverted to keep the golf course green. The scheme, costing $186 million, is reported in Indonesia as a joint project between Time Switch Investment, a company registered in the Isle of Man, and the chairperson of Indonesia's chamber of commerce, Aburizal Bakrie.

Golf courses frequently form the centrepiece of large developments as Indonesia pushes to turn tourism into its largest source of foreign revenue. There are 93 golf courses in the country with dozens more planned. According to one local group, many are owned by President Suharto's family.

New Scientist, Vol 142, No 1928

Music of the molecules

Joâl Sternheimer, a French physicist and musician, has applied for an international patent covering his melodies – which he claims help plants grow. Sternheimer says that in experiments, tomatoes exposed to his tunes grew two-and-a-half times as big as control specimens, some being sweeter as well. He also claims to have stopped a mosaic virus infection of the tomatoes by playing tunes that inhibited enzymes vital to the virus. The tunes are very short and need only be played once a day. 'On average, you get four amino acids played per second,' he says.

New Scientist, Vol 142, No 1927

INDIGENOUS ART

Grave robbery

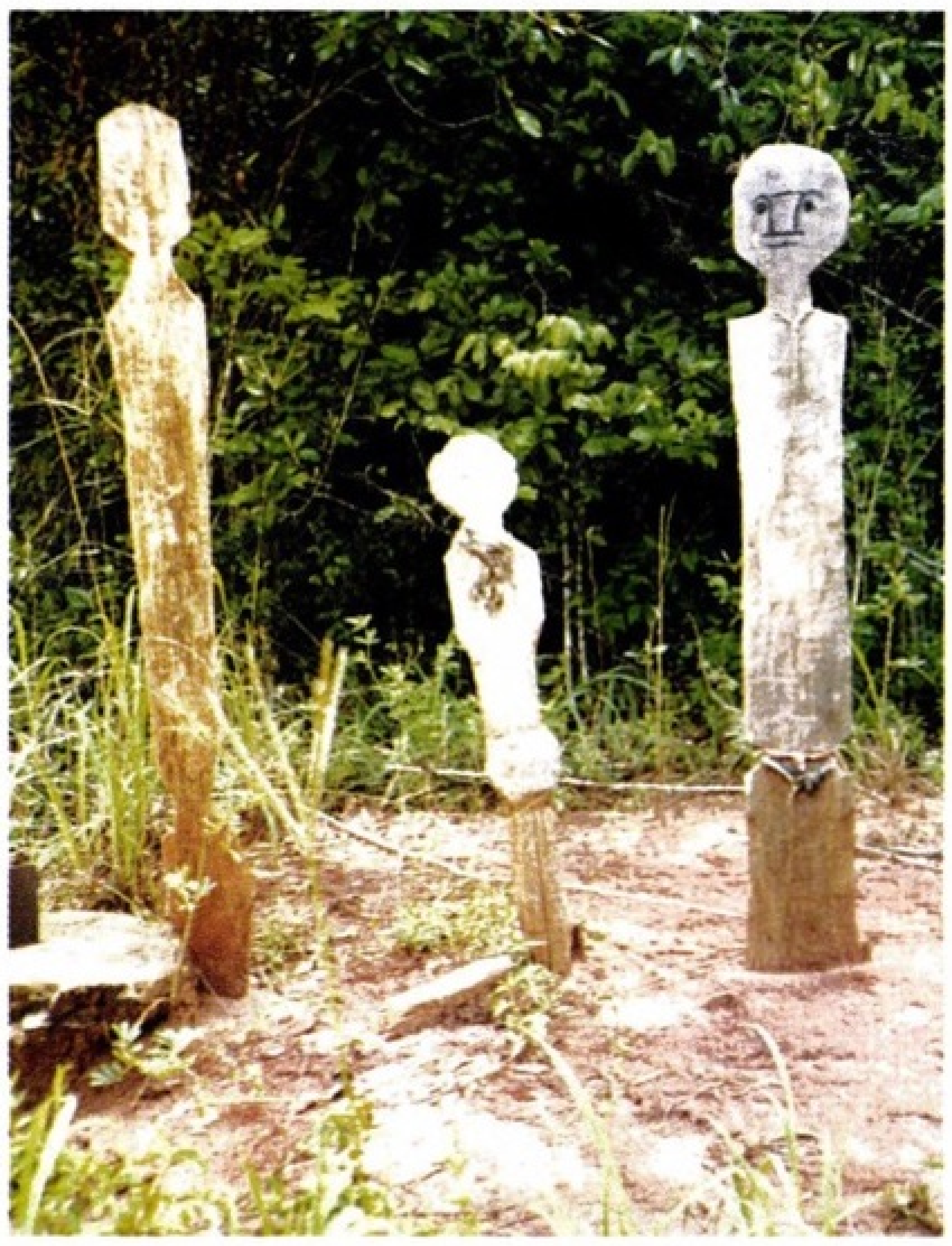
Stolen posts fetch high prices

By the side of the road were five wooden posts arranged in a neat row. They were two- to three-feet high, a couple had faces painted on them and some were decorated with pieces of string – *makoma* which the Giriama people of the Kenyan coastal hinterland use to commemorate their ancestors.

Our chance discovery of them in the midst of the forest meant that we must be near a *kaya*, an area of ritual importance to the Giriama. We piled out of the car and photographed the pieces of wood, but refrained from touching them.

Later that day we travelled to some Giriama settlements and asked to see their graveposts. A young Giriama man took us to a remote homestead where we were in for a shock. Under cover of darkness somebody had removed all the posts.

This bad news fitted only too well into our knowledge of the 'tribal' art trade. There is an international market for the ornately-carved graveposts called *vigango*, which commemorate people of rank and power. They are sold in Nairobi City Market and exported to Europe and America. In fact one of our party, Jane, had bought *vigango* in Nairobi and carried them to London where she had sold them. Now she was mortified.



SUSAN BECKERLEG

Ancestral memorials become commodities.

Private collectors and museums pay hundreds of dollars for carved graveposts. David, a London-based dealer, recently sold a set of *vigango* for $900. He justifies this as an act of conservation and argues that once graveposts are on sale in Nairobi the ancestors they represent have already been removed from their descendants' care. Maybe, he reasons, the grandchildren had converted to Christianity or Islam and no longer want to commemorate their ancestors. In any case, there is no way of knowing if the posts are stolen property. As art objects in museums or in the homes of wealthy collectors they will be well cared for.

Not everybody finds this argument convincing. Jane says she will no longer trade in graveposts. If all potential buyers and sellers adopted her attitude the demand would cease. Meanwhile the Giriama people hope that thieves will be deterred through fear of ancestral curses. During our short journey in search of graveposts a madman was pointed out to us. His hands twitched strangely. Our Giriama companion said the man was mad because he had been a gravepost-robber who had attempted to make ancestors into market commodities. ■

Susan Beckerleg

NIGEL DICKINSON

Smokey Mountain in Manila: not the most obvious alternative to deforestation, might prove to be a source of alternative 'wood'.

Ecowood

Filipino chemical engineer Margarita Centeno has invented an alternative to natural wood called Ecowood. It can be processed from waste materials such as dry leaves, rice straw, sawdust and plastic waste which are milled and powdered, then bound together into a hard, water-resistant and durable material. It is termite-proof, has a lighter density than natural wood, is longer lasting and could be made fire-proof. Its uses are obvious but whether it will bring about change in the forestry industry (which with its cycle of over-felling, soil erosion and floods is a major player in the Philippines) is open to question.

Warmer Bulletin, No 41

INDUSTRY

Toying with fire

Factory deaths highlight conditions in south-east Asia.

HONG KONG is the world's leading toy exporter. But very few toys are actually made there. Over 90 per cent of its trade is re-exports of products originally made in south-east Asia and, increasingly, in southern China. An estimated one-third of the world's toys are made in Guangdong, home to China's 'booming' free-trade zones.

Accidents in toy factories in south-east Asia have been a regular occurrence in recent years, but two incidents in 1993 were particularly horrendous. On 10 May a fire at a soft-toy factory in a free-trade zone outside Bangkok killed 188 workers, mostly young women.

The factory, Kader Industrial Thailand, was 40-per-cent owned by a Hong Kong firm. Under intense pressure – including a visit by survivors to the Hong Kong parent company – it paid $8,000 to each of the families of those killed, but otherwise dragged its feet in police and other inquiries.

Then on 19 November fire ripped through the Zhili Toy & Crafts factory, a Hong Kong-China joint venture in Guangdong's Shenzhen special economic zone, killing 84 workers. Compensation of only $2,600 to $6,500 has been paid to bereaved families, but unlike in Thailand, senior managers and fire officers have been arrested.

Devastation follows fire in Shenzhen factory.

HUGH WILLIAMSON

In both cases locked doors and windows meant workers were trapped inside. Staircases were blocked and little or no fire-fighting equipment was to hand. The Chinese fire was also blamed on the 'three-in-one' system, whereby factories, warehouses and workers' accommodation are combined in the same building.

The combined forces of trade unions, churches, women's and consumer groups in Hong Kong, Thailand, China and elsewhere have focused on bringing the culprits to book, in part through boycott campaigns. The Shenzhen factory made toys for Chicco, an Italian multinational, while Kader made Bart Simpson toys, among others. Both sets of products are being boycotted. Industrial safety laws have been tightened in Thailand and China since the fires, but critics still question their enforceability.

Now a general set of 'Toy Manufacturing Safety Guidelines' is being drawn up in Hong Kong, covering factory and job safety, a ban on three-in-one buildings and regular monitoring. 'The guidelines should be legally enforceable and apply to a company's foreign, as well as local operations,' says Tian Chua of Asia Monitor Resource Center, one of the Hong Kong groups involved. 'Guidelines covering toy safety for consumers already exist in the West,' says Chua, 'but products should be safe for workers too'. ■

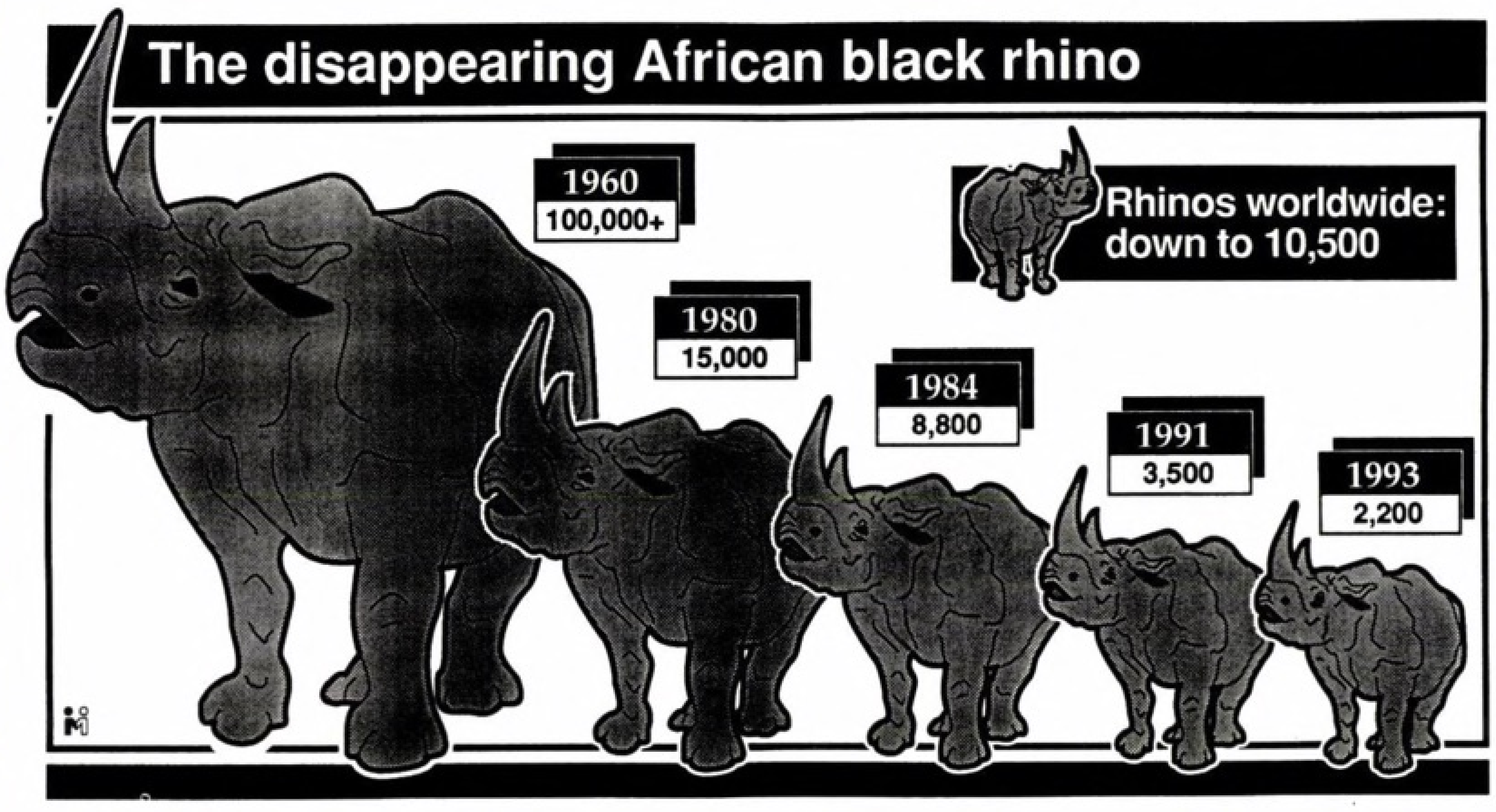
Hugh Williamson

Risky business

A number of private operators are springing into the gap between crime and available police cover in China. The Government is having a tough time regulating 'civil affairs investigations' firms (detective agencies) whose stock-in-trade includes debt extraction, credit checks, missing-person searches and the bugging and de-bugging of offices and phones. Some investigate suspicions of marital infidelity and one was even asked to confirm the virginity of a prospective bride. (They declined.)

But most of China's private protection industry is against theft. Beijing last year drafted a set of 'economic police management rules'. These allow for a company to install its own police station, usually with one official cop, who then deputizes sub-contracted guards (often migrant workers and ex-convicts) paid for and equipped by the company. Enterprises that cannot get approval for their own police stations hire security guards under euphemistic titles like 'technology development consultants'.

Far Eastern Economic Review, Vol 157, No 23



Controversial rescue

The world rhino population is down to 10,500. The African black rhino, numbering 100,000 in the 1960s, are now barely 2,200. In Zimbabwe the Government is getting to the rhino before the poachers and de-horning them. The animals are sedated, their health monitored and then the horns sawn off in a ten-minute operation.

The stumps are trimmed and painted with a disinfectant to prevent infection. The long-term effects of the operation are not known but the first de-horned rhino has given birth, indicating that sexual behaviour is unaffected.

But Steve Trent of the Environmental Investigation Agency believes that poachers who have tracked a rhino only to find it has no horn will probably kill it anyway to avoid tracking it again. 'The only way to stop this trade is to kill the demand in consumer countries,' says Trent.

Leopold Hatugari/Gemini

END

END Quote

'You're selling more than just food. You're selling a slice of America.'

Sandeep Kohli, managing director of Kentucky Fried Chicken in India, at its launch.

PHIL OCHS
All the News that's Fit to Sing
PHIL OCHS
I ain't marching any more

music

All the news that's fit to sing and I ain't marching any more

by **Phil Ochs** *(Re-released on CD, Hannibal 4427 and 4422)*

In Phil Ochs' self-penned sleeve notes to **I Ain't Marching Any More** the young songwriter tells how 'people walk up to me and ask: 'Do you really believe in what your songs are saying?'

Ochs clearly did. He was, until his suicide in 1976, the impassioned voice of America; an agitator whose songs about Vietnam, civil rights and ordinary working people were the direct descendants of folk music's most radical traditions. Some regarded him as the missing link between Woody Guthrie and Bob Dylan, or perhaps, Pete Seeger and Joan Baez. Ochs had only an acoustic guitar and a limited vocal range delivered in the phraseology of WC Fields, but the fiery conviction he gave to songs like *Too many martyrs, Iron Lady* and *The power and the glory* still crackles.

It's therefore something of a surprise that these two albums, dating from 1964 and 1965 respectively, have been unavailable for so long. Their re-release on CD format is long overdue. Containing between them nearly 30 songs, they take a sidelong glance at life in the home of the brave and the land of the free.

Ochs was not impressed with what he saw. *Too many martyrs* (on **All the news**) was a response to the murder of civil rights leader, Hedgar Evans; *Knock on the door* was about the terror of totalitarian regimes, although it could easily encompass American activity during the years of Cold War paranoia. While Ochs' music is a scuttling, no-nonsense country affair, his lyrical style is full of wry jokes and potent ironies. *Talking Vietnam* and *Talking Cuba* shared the same music, Ochs updating his lyrics to suit the occasion.

On a more gentle seeming note *The power and the glory* is a lilting journey across America which starts by describing the country's assets and – at the moment when the listener is basking in descriptions of fields and valleys – peoples the land with the dispossessed.

In 1965, the year that **Marching** was first released, Ochs' imagery and allusions are no longer veiled. Although the album is momentarily softened with a reverie on the assassinated JFK – *That was the President* – the prevailing mood is much sterner. *Iron Lady* – Ochs' phrase for the electric chair – is a chilling indictment of capital punishment. Racism is also tackled squarely in a number of songs and in several areas: in the unions, in Government and in the American Deep South. Ochs had an unerring eye for hypocrisy and these songs go straight to the heart of sanctimonious cant.

Politics ☆☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆☆

books

So far from God

by **Ana Castillo** *(The Women's Press, ISBN 0 7043 4396 7)*

This is the brave and witty story of five women: La Loca, who miraculously rises up from her coffin aged three; Fe, who is jilted by her lover and poisoned by her work in a factory; Esperanza, who becomes a journalist and disappears in the Gulf; Caridad, the healer who leaps out of this world with the woman she loves, and Sofia, their mother who survives them all.

It is a tale both tragic and funny; a hymn to women's endurance and to the harshness of their lives. Sofia has a feckless husband – who suddenly appears after an absence of twenty years – and four daughters who suffer all the indignities known to woman. But she decides to become the Mayor of Tome and goes on to found a workers' co-operative and MOMAS ('Mothers of Martyrs and Saints'). Sofia endures, no, she triumphs – while at the same time retaining her sense of humour.

Set in Chicana country the story is both down-to-earth and full of unearthly happenings. Its matter-of-fact delivery serves to make the magical believable. When La Loca is dying of AIDS, Doctor Tolentino and his wife come to help her. His ministrations involve prayers and cotton wool soaked in holy oil. But then he reaches into La Loca's stomach 'maintaining his left "material" hand in the opening, while the right "spirit" hand sought out the maladies' and 'pulled out some cystic fibroids and finally a tumour...' The lines between the surgical and the miraculous are blurred and anything seems possible.

Ana Castillo uses a direct colloquial style with little regard for punctuation, almost as if the writer is confiding her thoughts directly to the reader. Each chapter is prefaced with a description of what is going to happen next but phrased in such a way as to make the book impossible to put down. For instance: 'Of the Hideous Crime of Francisco el Penitente, and his Pathetic Calls Heard Throughout the Countryside as His Body Dangled from a Pinnion like a Crow-Picked Pear; and of the End of Caridad and Her Beloved Emerald Which We Nevertheless Will Refrain from Calling Tragic.'

Caridad's end is in fact tragic, but it is also an heroic choice. Like Thelma and Louise in the film of that name, there is a final leap into the air with Esmeralda 'flying off the mesa like a broken-winged moth, and holding tight to her hand was Caridad, more kite than woman billowing through mid-air'.

The themes and preoccupations of the 1990s continue to bump against far older traditions in a way which becomes not only believable but funny. Take Doña Felicia, the traditional healer who looks as if she were 'at least 90 years old', lives in a 'traila' and spends her time keeping up with her favourite soap operas on Spanish cable TV in between 'patients'.

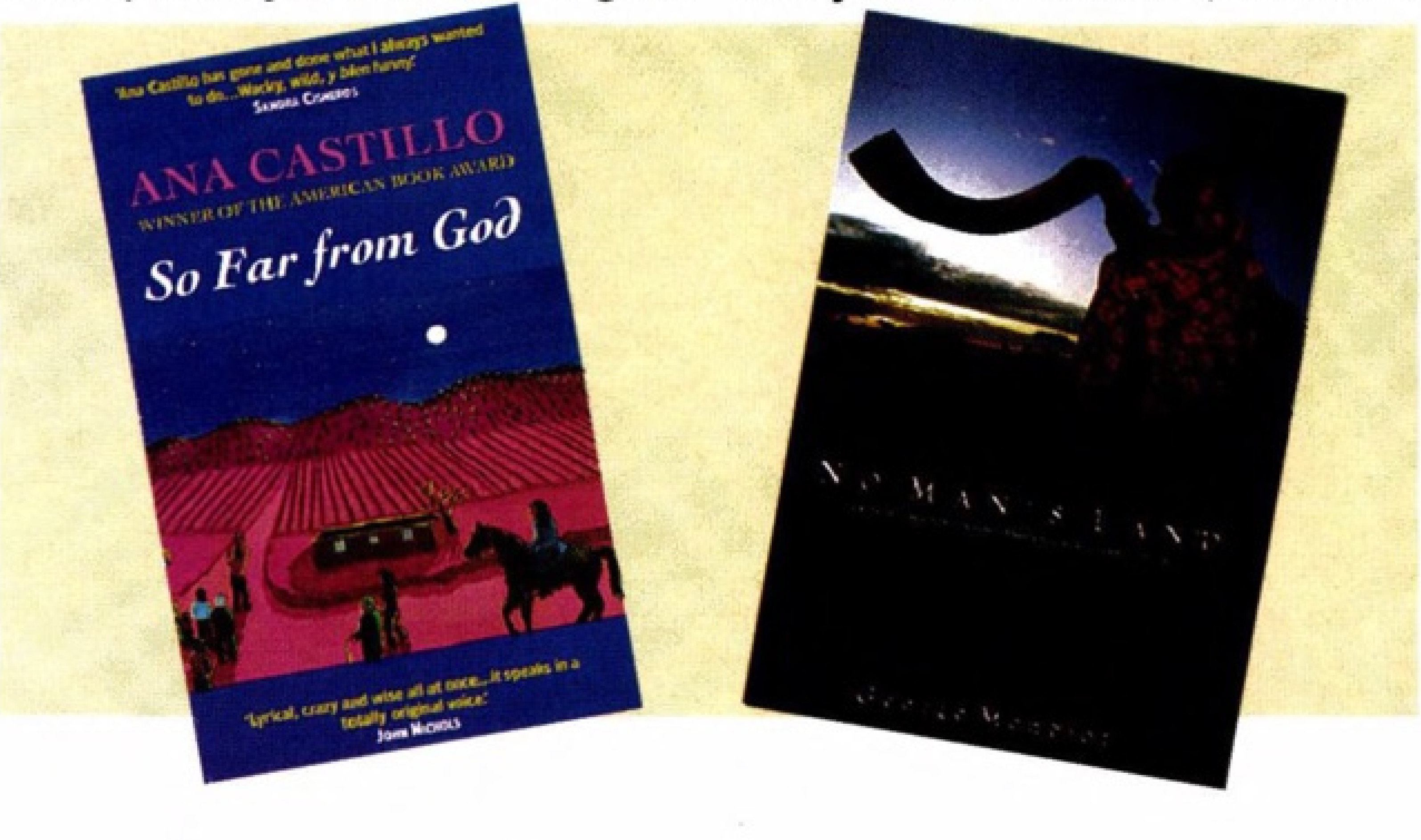
So Far from God is wacky and powerful. Its humour belies a strong political message – that in a world which deals them many harsh blows, women are still survivors. After death as well as during life.

Politics ☆☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆☆☆

No man's land

by **George Monbiot** *(Macmillan, ISBN 0-333-60163-7)*

Nomads and the nomadic way of life are under attack – both culturally and physically – by an alliance of governments, farming and conservation lobbies. Travelling through the traditional nomadic lands of Kenya and Tanzania, Monbiot



charts the terrible human and ecological degradation caused by the governmental pursuit of tourist dollars.

In a prose that is lucid and unhysterical, the author describes the Kenyan Government's practice of arming the nomads' tribal enemies and encouraging raids upon them. The nomads – whose lifestyle is co-operative and use of resources appropriate – suffer beatings, 'confiscations' and torture at the hands of the land-grabbers.

Their old ways of life are being subverted in innumerable ways. Barter is forcibly replaced by cash, and the land, no longer able to regenerate since the herders cannot move on, is exhausted after just a few months.

Monbiot is not afraid to challenge guilty officialdom – the directors and officials who sanction illegal ploughing of tribal lands and the slaughter of cattle are clearly in the firing line of his criticism.

But he also feels deeply for the cultural loss of the rituals and ceremonies among the nomads once they have been dispossessed of land and heritage by 'civilized' interests. Contrasting civilization (*civis* or 'town' – 'not moving') with horde (*ordu* or 'camp' – 'mobile') he considers how static societies inevitably attempt to ostracize any travelling culture – usually by denying it the means of survival.

Monbiot is also keenly aware of the ways in which the appropriation of commons and the privatization of land has affected the quality of life and eroded civil liberties in Western society. Ironically, he has recently been moving around on crutches as a result of injuries sustained at the hands of guards from Britain's infamous private security company, Group 4. He was taking part in a peaceful protest to defend Solsbury Hill in England from the Government's ecologically-devastating road-building plans. Monbiot took considerable personal risks to expose abuses of power in East Africa, only to be injured by similar abuses in his own country.

Politics ☆☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆☆☆

STAR RATING

Excellent	☆☆☆☆☆
Very good	☆☆☆☆
Good	☆☆☆
Fair	☆☆
Poor	☆

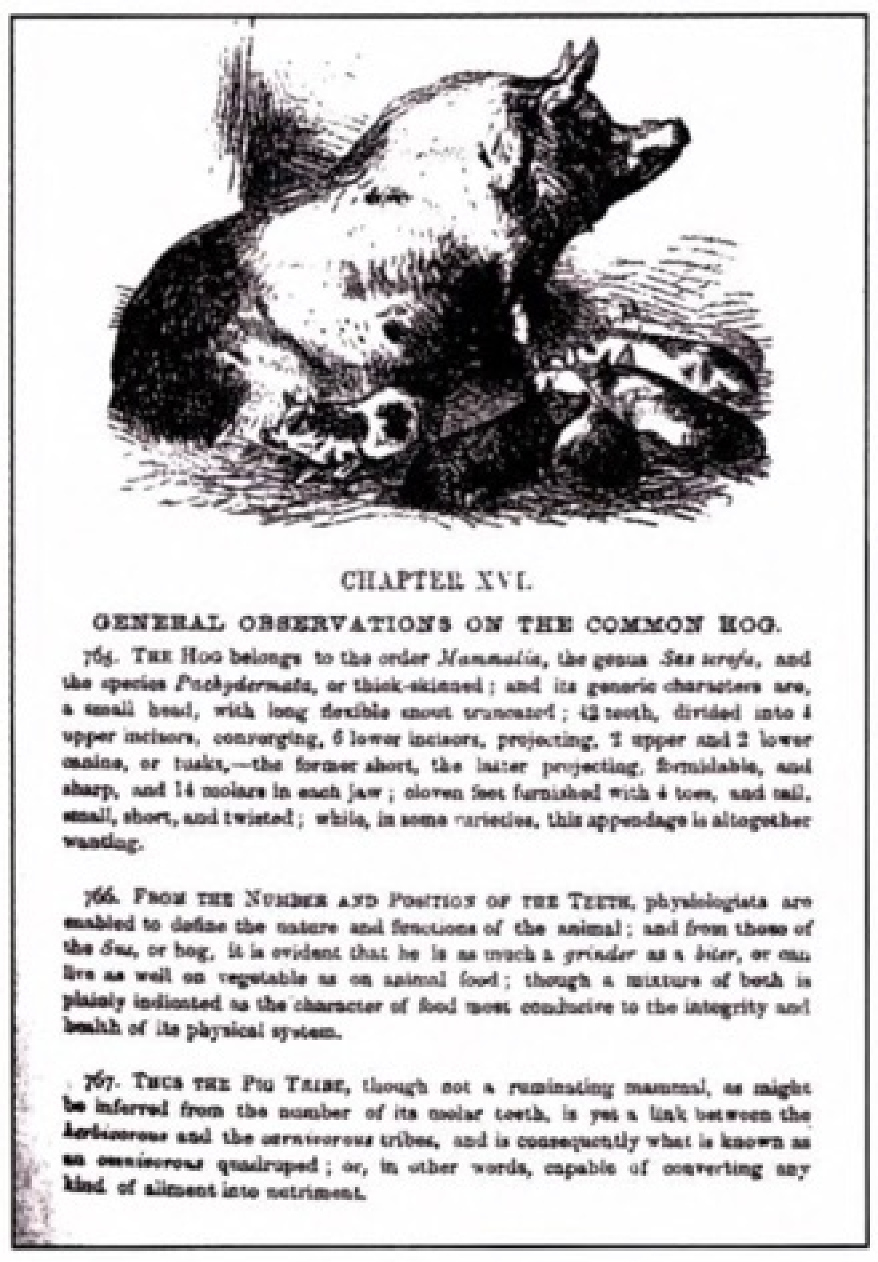
Reviews editor: **Vanessa Baird**

THE *classic*

Mrs Beeton's book of household management

...being the book that linked anatomized domestic life in telling detail.

The Book of Household Management Comprising information for the Mistress, Housekeeper, Cook, Kitchen-Maid, Butler, Footman, Coachman, Valet, Upper and Under House-Maids, Lady's-Maid, Maid-of-all-Work, Laundry-Maid, Nurse and Nurse-Maid, Monthly Wet and Sick Nurses, etc. etc. – also Sanitary, Medical, & Legal Memoranda: with a History of the Origin, Properties, and Uses of all Things Connected with Home Life and Comfort – to give it its full title – first appeared in monthly supplements to *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* between 1859 and 1861. The 1,112-page tome which followed gives the appearance of being the *Gray's Anatomy* of cookery. It certainly resembles this 1858 textbook in typography, illustrative layout and general organization.



CHAPTER XVI.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE COMMON HOG.

765. The Hog belongs to the order *Mammalia*, the genus *Sus scrofa*, and the species *Pachydermata*, or thick-skinned; and its generic characters are, a small head, with long flexible snout truncated; 42 teeth, divided into 4 upper incisors, converging, 6 lower incisors, projecting, 2 upper and 2 lower canine, or tusks,—the former short, the latter projecting, formidable, and sharp, and 14 molars in each jaw; cloven feet furnished with 4 toes, and tail, small, short, and twisted; while, in some varieties, this appendage is altogether wanting.

766. From the Number and Position of the Teeth, physiologists are enabled to define the nature and functions of the animal; and from those of the *Sus*, or hog, it is evident that he is as much a *grinder* as a *biter*, or can live as well on vegetable as on animal food; though a mixture of both is plainly indicated as the character of food most conducive to the integrity and health of its physical system.

767. Thus the Pig Tribe, though not a *ruminating* mammal, as might be inferred from the number of its molar teeth, is yet a link between the *herbivorous* and the *carnivorous* tribes, and is consequently what is known as an *omnivorous* quadruped; or, in other words, capable of converting any kind of aliment into nutriment.

More than 900 of its closely-printed pages are engulfed by one of the most compendious collections of recipes and culinary advice ever assembled. Its length is not only a result of its breathtaking attempt at comprehensiveness (which alone generates an analytical index of more than 30 pages) but also of Beeton's wish to give 'an account of the natural history of the animals and vegetables which we use as food'. At the mention of a herbal or vegetable ingredient in a recipe the reader is usually offered, in tiny type, something akin to a concise encyclopaedic entry. Thus under *Chantilly Soup* and *Parsley and Butter Sauce* Beeton elaborates on the various uses of parsley by the Greeks and Romans and tells us that 'to rabbits, hares, and sheep it is a luxury, to parrots it is a poison'. Sprinkled throughout a chapter of mutton recipes are, likewise, miscellaneous digressions on the general theme of sheep. For example, the myth of the Golden Fleece is told, poetry on sheep is quoted and the process of woollen manufacture is explained.

Although **The Book of Household Management** can still conceivably be used as a straightforward recipe book, my own tendency is to dip into it for its informative, sometimes eccentric, words of wisdom on a particular food item. For instance, on vinegar: 'Spartianus, a Latin historian, tells us that, mixed with water, it was the drink of Roman soldiers.' This immediately dispelled my puzzlement, first felt as a child, as to why the dying Jesus Christ was reportedly given vinegar to drink. The book also has a multitude of unwittingly amusing aspects which I am often tempted to exploit. I recently read its outrageous code of dinnerparty conduct to three women with whom I was eating ('it is not usual, where taking wine is *en regle*, for a gentleman to ask a lady to take wine until the fish or soup is finished...')

But I also find myself using the sections which have nothing to do with cookery as a reminder of how oppressive and cloying Victorian England must have been. Some of these, such as the potted chapters on medical care, were no doubt useful reference guides in their day. Others, such as the legal memoranda, reveal the truly grim side of Victorian domestic life: 'The law does not at this day admit the ancient principle of allowing moderate correction by a husband upon the person of his wife – he may, notwithstanding ... keep her under restraint, to prevent her leaving him, provided this be effected without cruelty.' The euphemistic phrasing here suggests a strong belief in the unquestionableness of male power.

Such chapters were not written by Beeton but 'contributed by gentlemen fully entitled to confidence'. But her own writing is also astonishingly reactionary: 'If the mistress be a wife,' she advises female heads of bourgeois households in the key first chapter, 'never let an account of her husband's failings pass her lips.' This is followed by utterly authoritarian instruction on dress, visiting, conduct at evening parties and balls, the passing of leisure hours and house-hunting ('the neighbourhood of all factories of any kind, producing unwholesome effluvia or smells, should be strictly avoided'). A modern reader, whatever his or her ideological persuasion, is likely to be left agog by the staggering exactitude with which Beeton lays down her quite arbitrary laws on female behaviour, and stunned by the sublime confidence with which she offers for universal adoption the mores of her own tiny and bigoted social class. **The Book of Household Management** shows an admirable concern, even in its title, to promote social transformation in attempting to win for women's domestic work the status of a profession; at the same time, it is blissfully happy to preserve the class and gender relations of the 1860s in its all-pervasive, prescriptive moralizing. The result is an extremely contradictory reading experience: practically useful, historically illuminating, politically disturbing and unintentionally comic, sometimes all at once.

Macdonald Daly

***The Book of Household Management** by **Isabella Beeton** is published in a first edition facsimile by Chancellor Press, 1987.*

Q? UESTIONS

...that have always intrigued you about the world will appear in this, your section, and be answered by other readers. Please address your answers and questions to 'Curiosities'.

Is it true that during mating the male duck will sometimes drown – and kill – the female?

Yes, if they are Mallard drakes. They literally line up and peck and push one another off the female duck to get there next. Every year I rescue one or two ducks who have been wounded in this process, but last year was the worst. As a result of this mating 'style' few ducks are left and the plight of those that are is desperate. I'm a vegetarian normally but I'd eat our Mallard drakes!

Gay Challands
Shrewsbury, UK

NIKKI VAN DER GAAG

Female Mallard risks her life for seduction.

When the duck season is well advanced – with most females having already mated and sitting on eggs – fewer and fewer ducks become available for the drakes to mate with. Any female entering breeding condition late – or having lost her eggs or ducklings – will be the target for competing drakes who will descend upon the hapless female for a gang-rape which can result in her being drowned.

Lane Morris Jorgensen
Tokomaru, Aotearoa/NZ

I've noticed that the war in the former Yugoslavia has been described as 'ethnic conflict' while what has been happening in Rwanda is described as 'tribal war'. What is the difference between an 'ethnic group' and a 'tribe'?

The King of Baganda speaking on BBC Radio 4's *File on Four* programme recently said: 'the word "tribe" essentially means the old nations of Africa'. *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* states that 'ethnic' derives from the Greek *ethnos*, meaning nation. Therefore there need be no difference between an ethnic group and a tribe. Presumably we use the word derogatively because it doesn't accord with the national boundaries imposed so arbitrarily by the colonial powers.

Janet Pascoe
Uxbridge, UK

Is it true that the hole in the ozone layer is getting smaller?

No. The ozone hole which appears over Antarctica in the springtime is as prominent as ever. There is no discernible trend in its 'depth' – the extent to which the ozone layer is depleted – but there are natural variations in the damage from year to year. As it happens, the hole in 1993 was the deepest yet recorded. Incorrect suggestions that the hole is getting smaller might have arisen from the finding that CFCs – the principal source of ozone-destroying chlorine atoms – are accumulating in the atmosphere at a decreasing rate. But they are accumulating nonetheless, and will probably continue to do so at least until 1998. There is now good evidence that these compounds can also cause an ozone hole of sorts to open up over the Arctic.

Dr Philip Ball
London, UK

AWAITING YOUR ANSWERS

Who actually thought up the term 'political correctness'?

Tamara Torobin
Gloucester, Canada

Does anyone have the full name and address of the manufacturers of the birth control IUD *Copper 7*? Who do you write to if you have been made sterile as a result of this awful device? Do you sue the doctor who inserted it? Is there a law firm looking after those of us who are seeking damages?

Sue Haines
Toronto, Canada

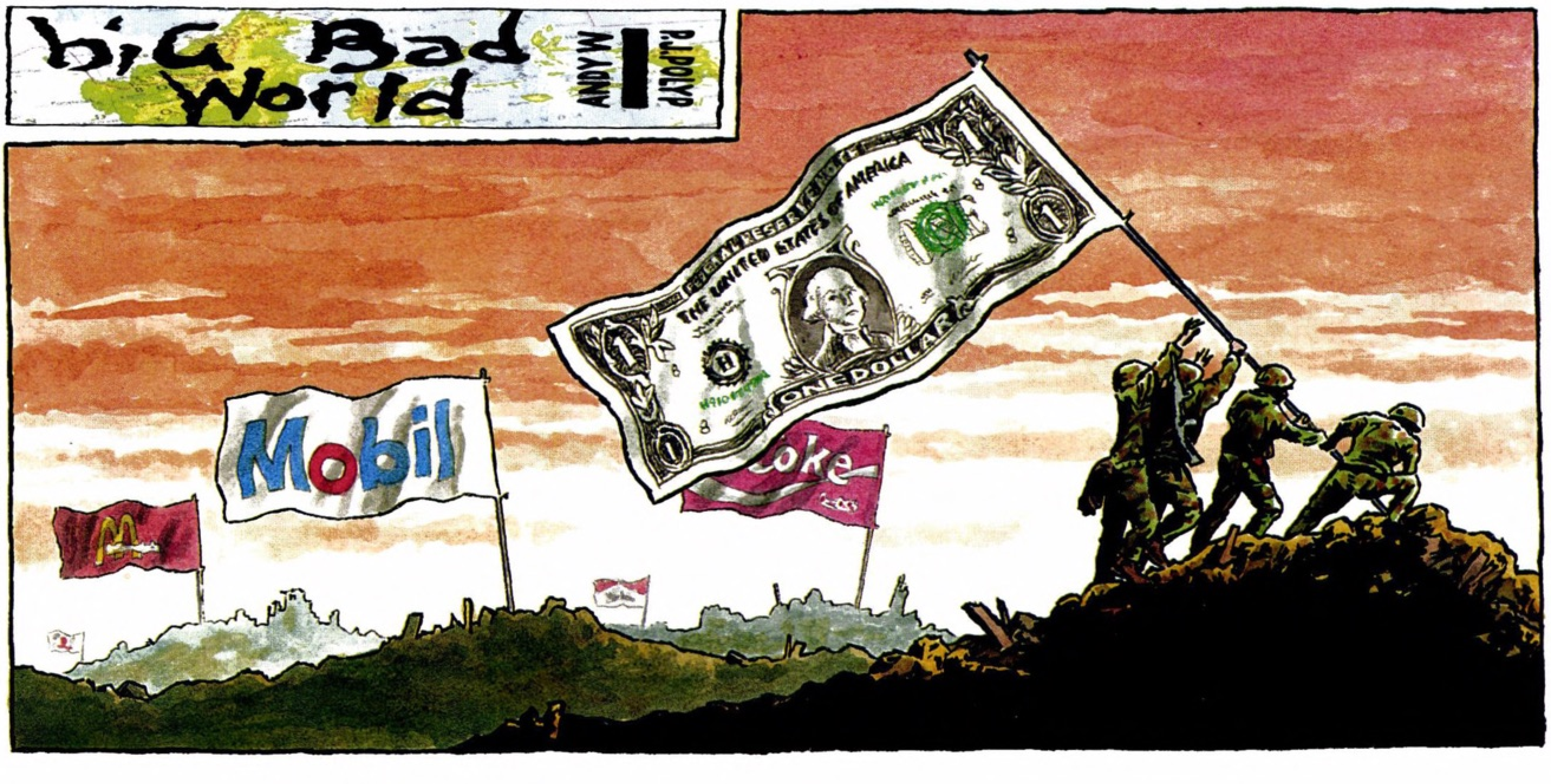
I would like to know how the International Monetary Fund would be able to force a country – like Canada – to pay its debt if that country's government told it to go to hell? Whose army would the IMF use?

Norman Barney
Petrolia, Canada

Which country in the world was under colonial rule for the longest time?

Tariq M M Antar
Khartoum, Sudan

If you have any questions or answers please send them to Curiosities, **New Internationalist, 55 Rectory Road, Oxford OX4 1BW, UK,** or to your local **NI** office (see inside front cover for addresses).



The disease of the surprise visitor

In the first of a two-part series ***Brandon Aston Jones****, a death-row prisoner in the US, contemplates the part prison plays in recycling the violence it sets out to punish.*

'WHAT is prison like?' people ask. I cannot speak for others but I can expose some situations that are universal for long-term prisoners or those, like me, who are held under sentence of death.

Inside prison there exists a world so harsh and bizarre one cannot over-emphasize its brutal complexities; its perpetual assaults upon the senses and the psyche and, therefore, upon society in general. After all, most prisoners will eventually be released.

Recently, while talking to my attorney in the prison visiting room, I witnessed a scene I know only too well. On the other side of the wire mesh partition a young prisoner and a woman, who was obviously his mother, were both crying. She seemed around 40 years of age, he could not have been a day over 20.

She looked bewildered. Through her tears she asked him: 'Son, what's wrong? Why aren't you glad to see me?' Wiping away his tears, he snapped vehemently at her: 'I've told you never to come to this place without letting me know you were coming first.'

It was apparent to me that he did not know why he was being so hostile to his mother. He was clearly as bewildered as she. Neither of them had a clue as to why he wasn't overjoyed to see this person he loved so much. I'm sure they both suspected it had something to do with his being in prison... but exactly what they didn't know.

Brandon Aston Jones has been living on death row for the past 15 years.

Their anguish was symptomatic of a condition I shall call 'the disease of the surprise visitor'. What they were experiencing was the effect of the son's lack of emotional and psychological preparation for the physical presence of someone visiting from outside.

You see, if you don't get regularly scheduled visits you fall into the emotional and psychological pit of deterioration that is the daily reality of prison life. Prisons in the US are such that the prisoner must – in order to survive mentally, psychologically and physically – develop total insensitivity to her or his fellow human.

Most prison administrations plant, cultivate and maintain an atmosphere inside the prison that is contrary to any normal concept of humane behaviour. So if one gets a surprise visit (even from a mother) and one has not developed the control required to emotionally and psychologically unwind, one is likely to be menacing and hostile. The mother will not know who that angry son or daughter of hers is.

Because of prison's insidious and diabolical nature – and the strategies the prisoner is forced to maintain in order to survive at all – many prisoners need a minimum of 72 hours just to gear down from prison's violent cycles. The surprise visit under such conditions can be a less than positive experience for all concerned, especially if no-one knows why the prisoner is so angry.

Prison is not meant to be like that, but that's the way it is. Prison administrations would have you believe that they are simply in the business of warehousing and confining bodies. But prison does not only do this. It rearranges and decomposes the individual, and intentionally destroys the prisoner's social equilibrium. Without that balance the prisoner may become very unpleasant.

And I mean it when I say that prison does this 'intentionally'. The atmosphere of constant terror and violence is not an accidental occurrence: it is deliberately and administratively used to control the prison population. Terror is the tool most often used to set the stronger, more prone-to-violence prisoners upon the weaker ones; creating and maintaining a 'predator mentality' that will be released, eventually, upon society.

This sanctioned violence is designed to facilitate control over the prison population. It perpetuates public insensitivity to the prisoner's basic human rights – routinely violated by the prison administration. And it allows prison administrators to be immune from the laws and the courts that could order them to stop perpetrating this emotional and physical violence.

Confining and warehousing bodies is but an incidental aspect of the American prison system. The goal of most prison administrators – as both my experience and logic tell me – is to antagonize, demoralize, dehumanize and emotionally destabilize each prisoner. That is why so many prisoners walk out of prison and create the violent situations which send them back to prison.

Politicians use prisoners and public fear of their re-entry into society to get elected by making promises to build more prisons instead of correcting the administrations that control those already there. And the prison administrators work in cahoots with politicians to dupe the public.

This is America's new growth industry. Needless to say the scheme is proving profitable. 'Rehabilitation' is little more than a word – to politicians a meaningless word they need not concern themselves with. And there are a hundred thousand ways that prison administrators go about driving prisoners into a state of madness.

Deliberately. ■

Brandon Aston Jones *welcomes letters. His address is GDCC, G2-51 EF 122216, PO Box 3877 Jackson, GA 30233, USA.*

Next month: Taking a photo for my mother.

Morocco

'BELIEVE me,' said one human-rights activist, 'Morocco is not as beautiful as it looks. The tourist brochures tell only part of the story.' Situated less than 15 kilometres from the southernmost tip of Europe, Morocco is a land of physical diversity: dramatic mountain ranges and idyllic beaches, fertile plains and dusty deserts.

But there are other contrasts. The five-star lifestyle of the tourist hotels and the Moroccan élite jar alongside the poverty which afflicts over half of the population. The traditional way of life coexists uneasily with the modern. The bustling, hustling cities are a world away from a countryside that seems to be standing still.

Morocco remained autonomous until the early twentieth century and then suffered a spell as a French colony (from 1912) before winning independence in 1956.

It has been ruled with an iron rod since 1962 by King Hassan II, who has much in common with medieval English kings. His authority is semi-religious – he claims direct descent from the Prophet (Mohammed) – and he moves his lavish court from place to place. He is popularly believed to have charismatic powers, and has shown a hunger for conquest. In 1975 Morocco invaded Western Sahara, home of the Sahrawi people. It has remained there ever since, despite pressure from the UN and the tenacious resistance of the Sahrawi's Polisario Liberation Front.

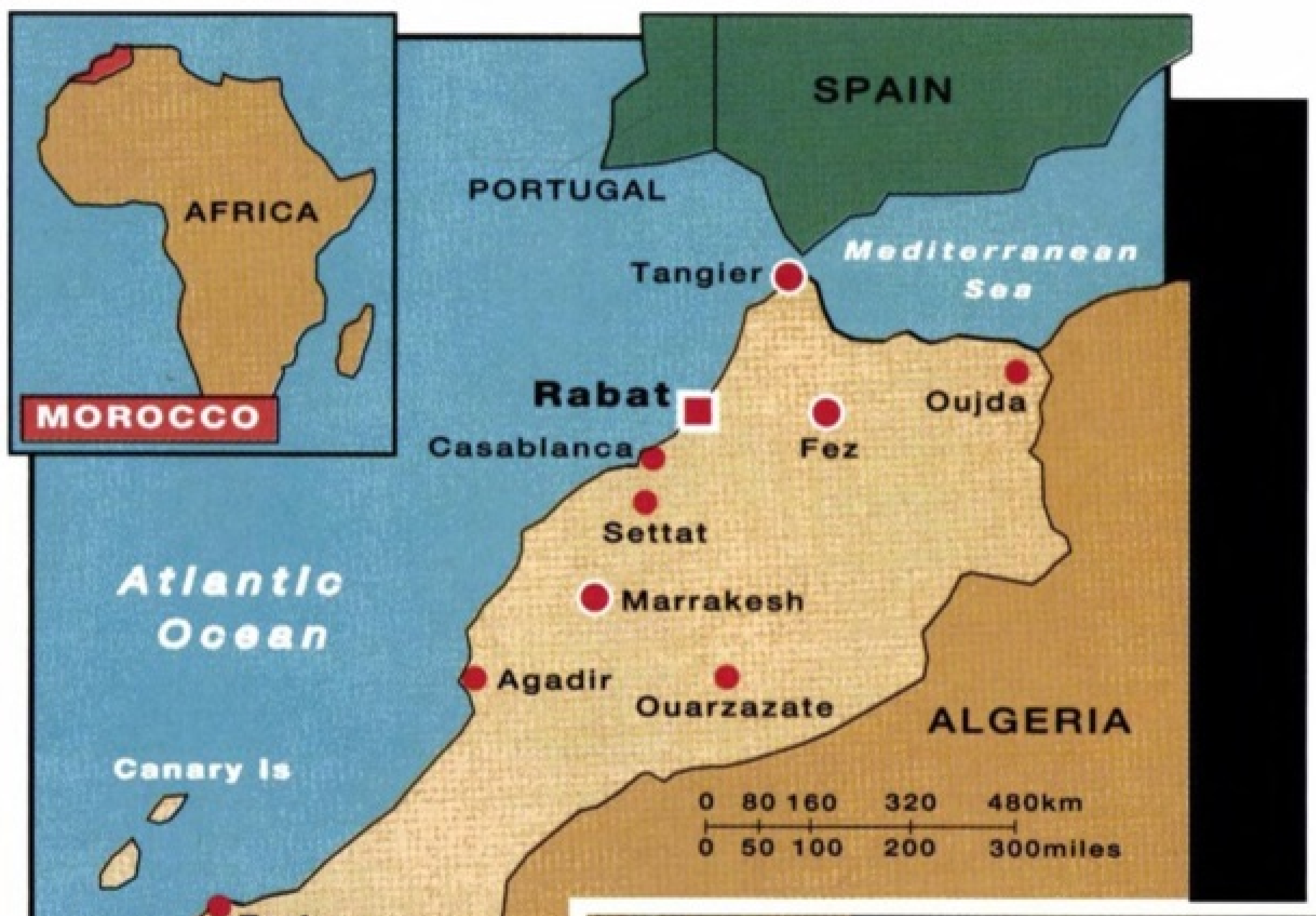
The King retains a firm grip on power, in spite of urban riots in protest at economic reforms imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). His position has been reinforced by the use of arbitrary arrest, torture and disappearance for those who speak out too loudly. Despite some moves towards constitutional democracy, the human-rights situation remains poor.

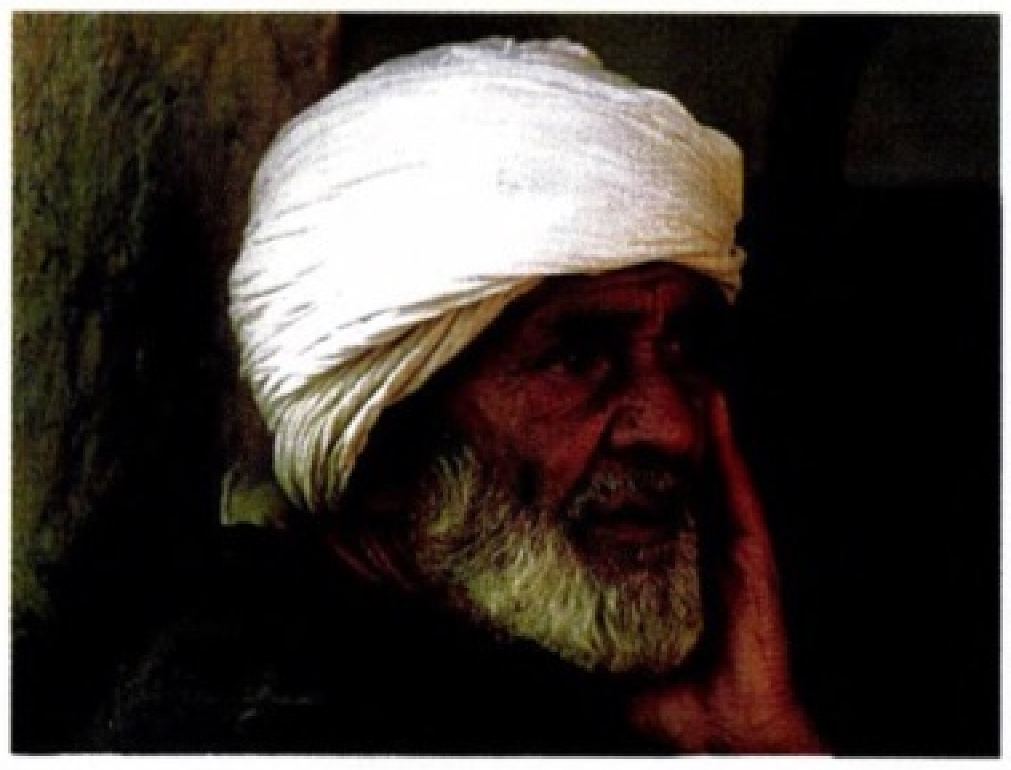
The Moroccans in the cities display an entrepreneurial passion and ingenuity which suggest that given the chance, the country could be an economic powerhouse. Yet it continues to suffer difficulties, compounded by human-made problems like debt and the IMF's 'structural adjustment' – as well as natural ones. The country is prone to drought which can have a devastating impact because agriculture employs some 40 per cent of the work force. The situation may worsen as Morocco's potential advantages – such as closeness to Europe and cheap labour – may fail to deliver more trade and investment given Western Europe's growing links with Eastern Europe.

As well as export earnings from phosphate mining, fruit and vegetables and textiles, Morocco enjoys significant revenue from tourism. From a hippy Mecca in the 1960s, the country is now the destination for more than one-and-a-half million tourists a year.

Tourists often suffer the resentment of the Moroccans, most visibly being besieged by 'guides' at the entrance to every *kasbah* in the country. Such resentment and hidden unemployment may soon boil over. ■

Peter Madden





BARBEY / MAGNUM

AT A glance

Excellent	★★★★★
Good	★★★★
Fair	★★★
Poor	★★
Appalling	★

POLITICS
Right wing monarchy; elections allegedly rigged.
LEFT RIGHT
1984 LEFT RIGHT

INCOME DISTRIBUTION ★★
Disparity between urban and rural areas.
1984 ★★

LITERACY ★★
50% for adults. Low but improving.
1984 ★

SELF-RELIANCE ★★
High dependence on European market and on IMF.
1984 ★★

FREEDOM ★★
Political dissent repressed; iron rule by king.
1984 ★★

POSITION OF WOMEN ★★
Islamic tradition.
1984 ★★

LIFE EXPECTANCY ★★★
63 years; improving *(US 76 years).*
1984 ★★

Leader King Hassan II
Economy GNP per capita US $1,030 *(US $22,240).*
Monetary unit: Dirham
Main exports: Fertilizers, fruit, grains, fish, textiles.
Main imports: Oil, wheat, chemicals, machinery
People 26.3 million, 70% under 25 years old, 50% urban.
Health *Infant mortality* 50 per 1,000 live births *(US 9 per 1,000).*
Culture Mainly Arab, one-third are Berbers
Religion: Mainly Muslim. Christian and Jewish minorities. Freedom of worship guaranteed under the constitution.
Languages: Arabic (official) is the most widely spoken, also French, Spanish and various Berber dialects.

***Sources** The State of the World's Children 1994, UNICEF; Human Development Report 1994, UNDP; World Bank World Development Report 1993; Morocco Centre for Export Promotion Morocco in Figures 1994.*

Last profiled in December 1984

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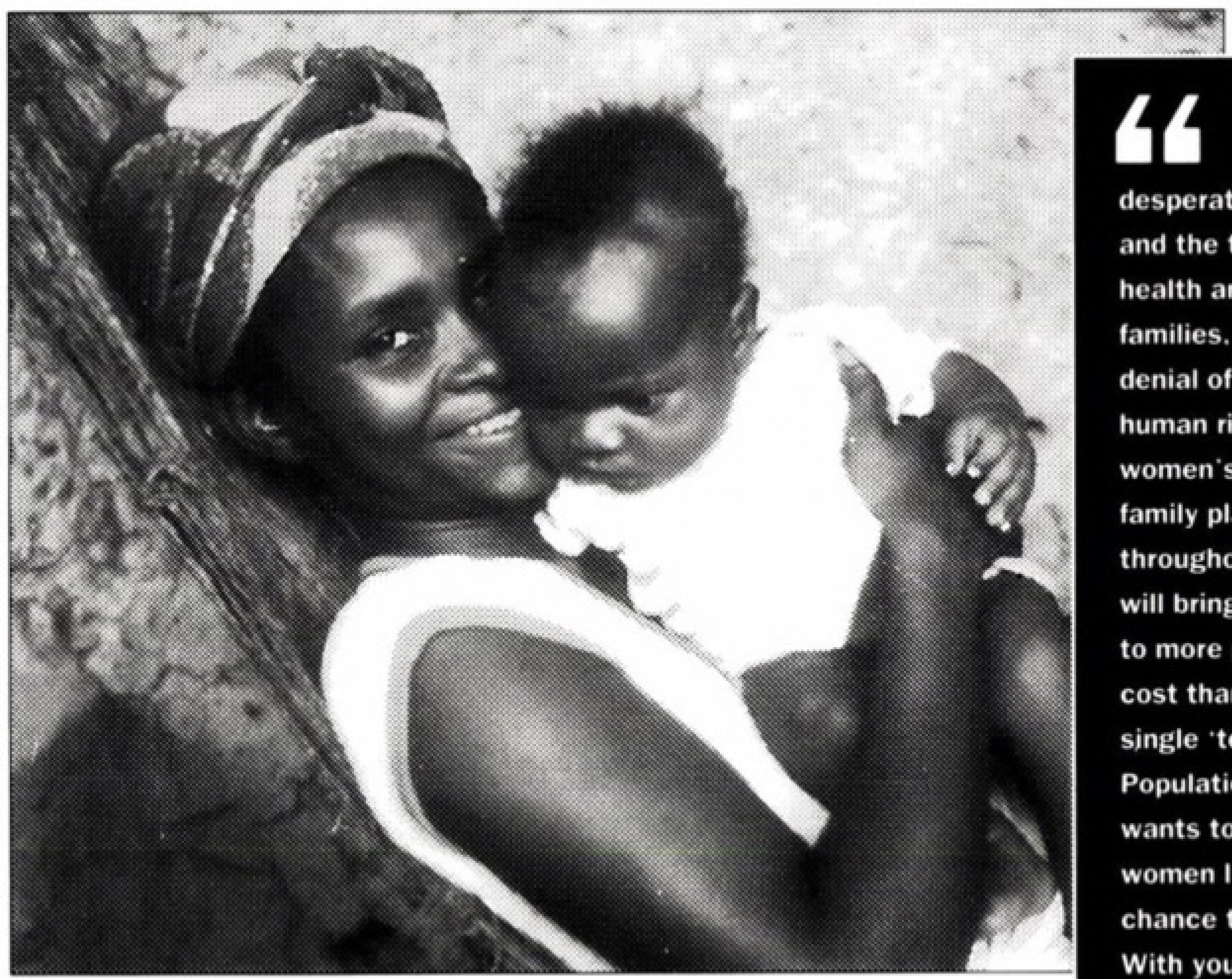

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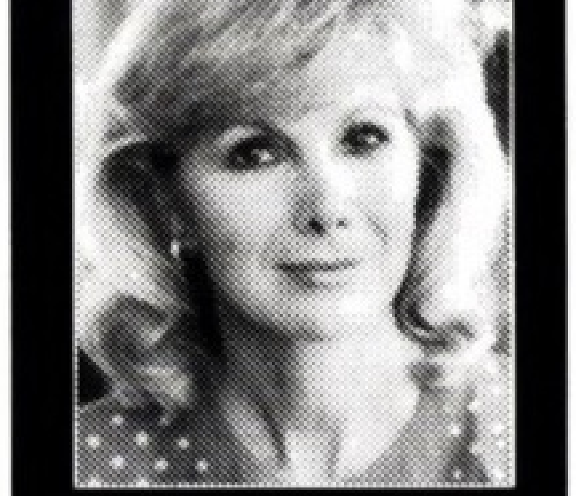

Susan Hampshire

Susan Hampshire
Vice President

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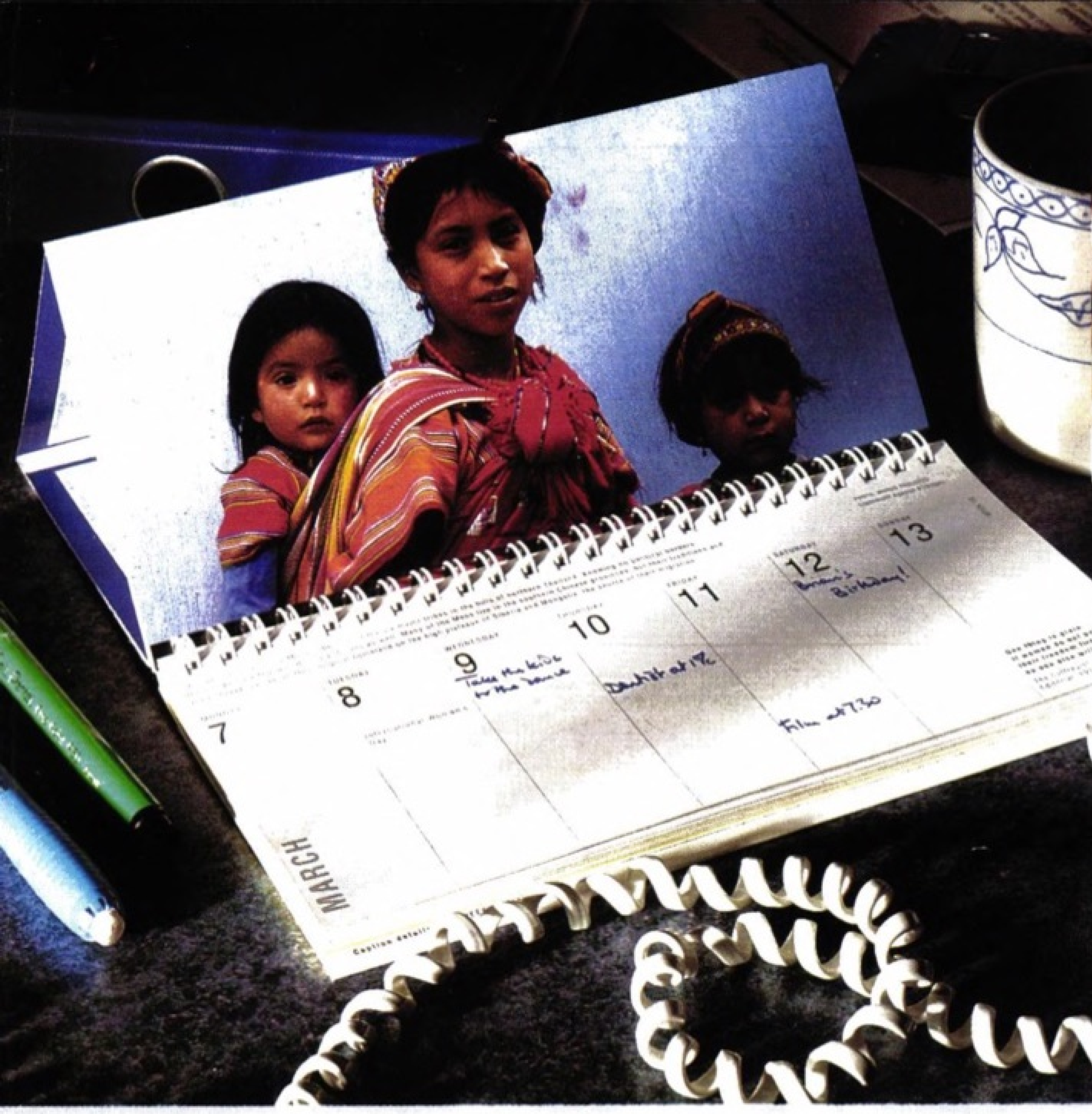
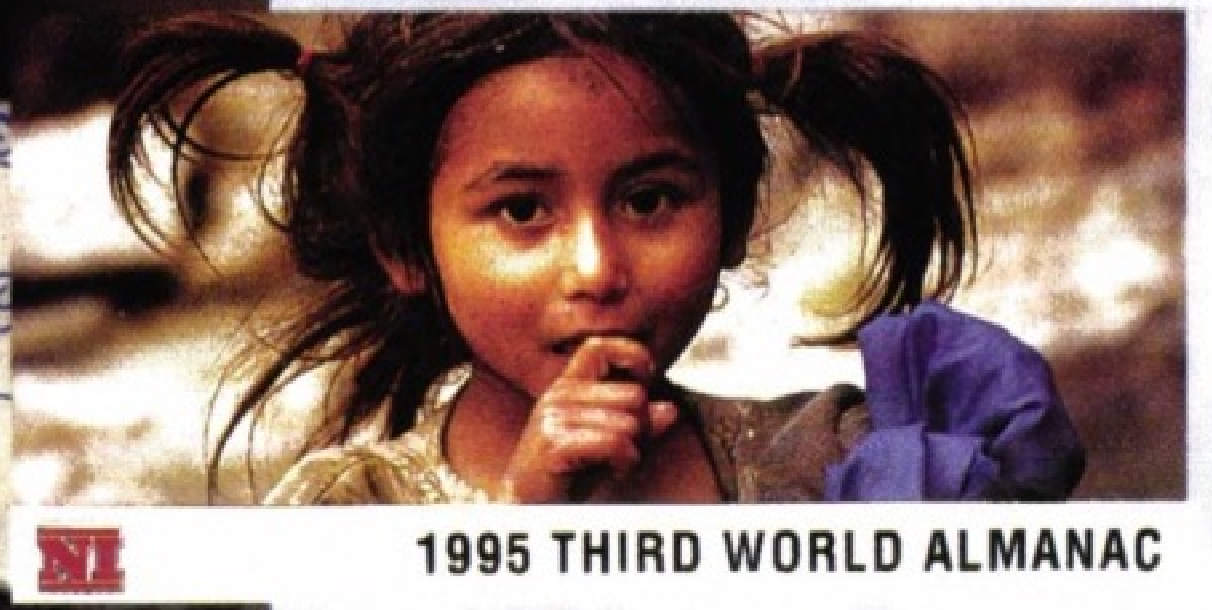


THE NI 1995 THIRD WORLD ALMANAC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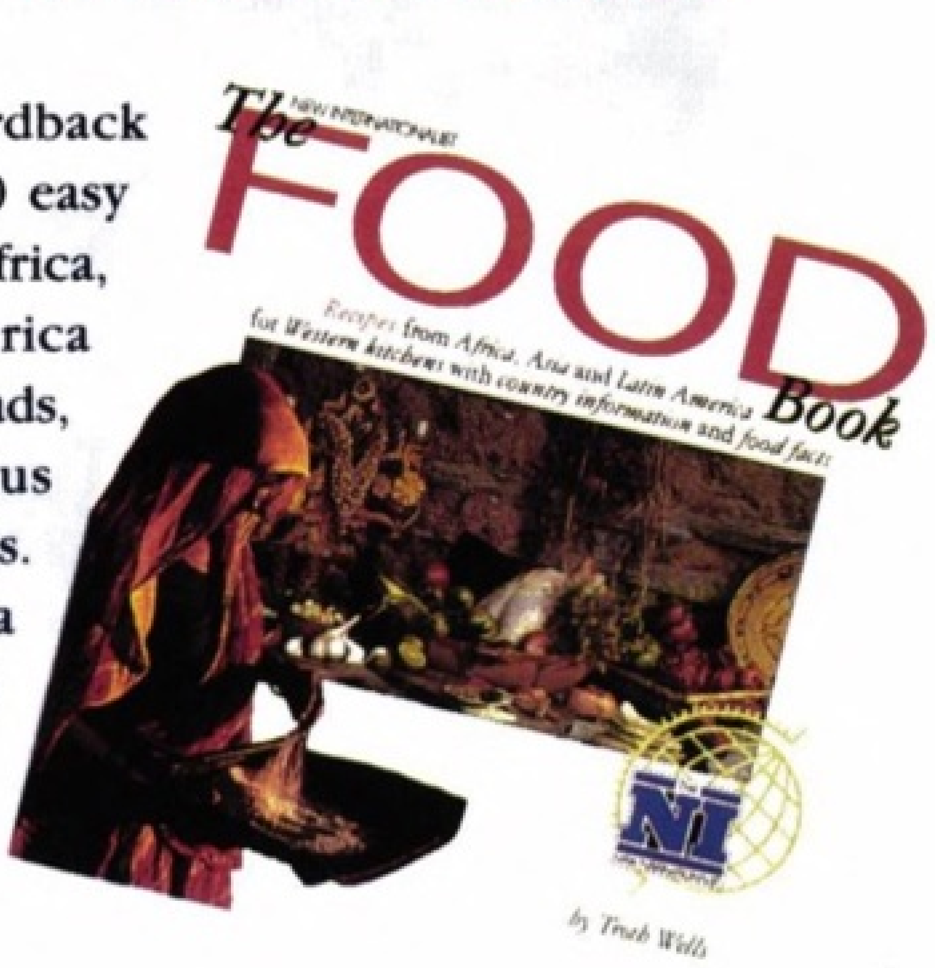
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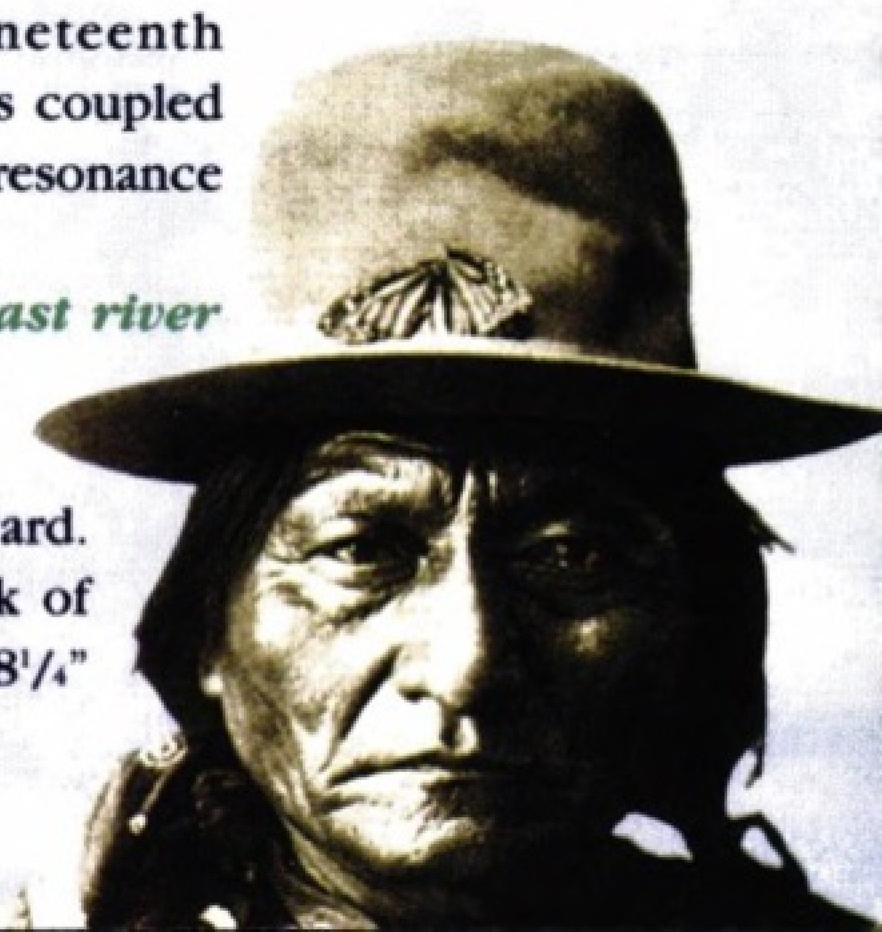

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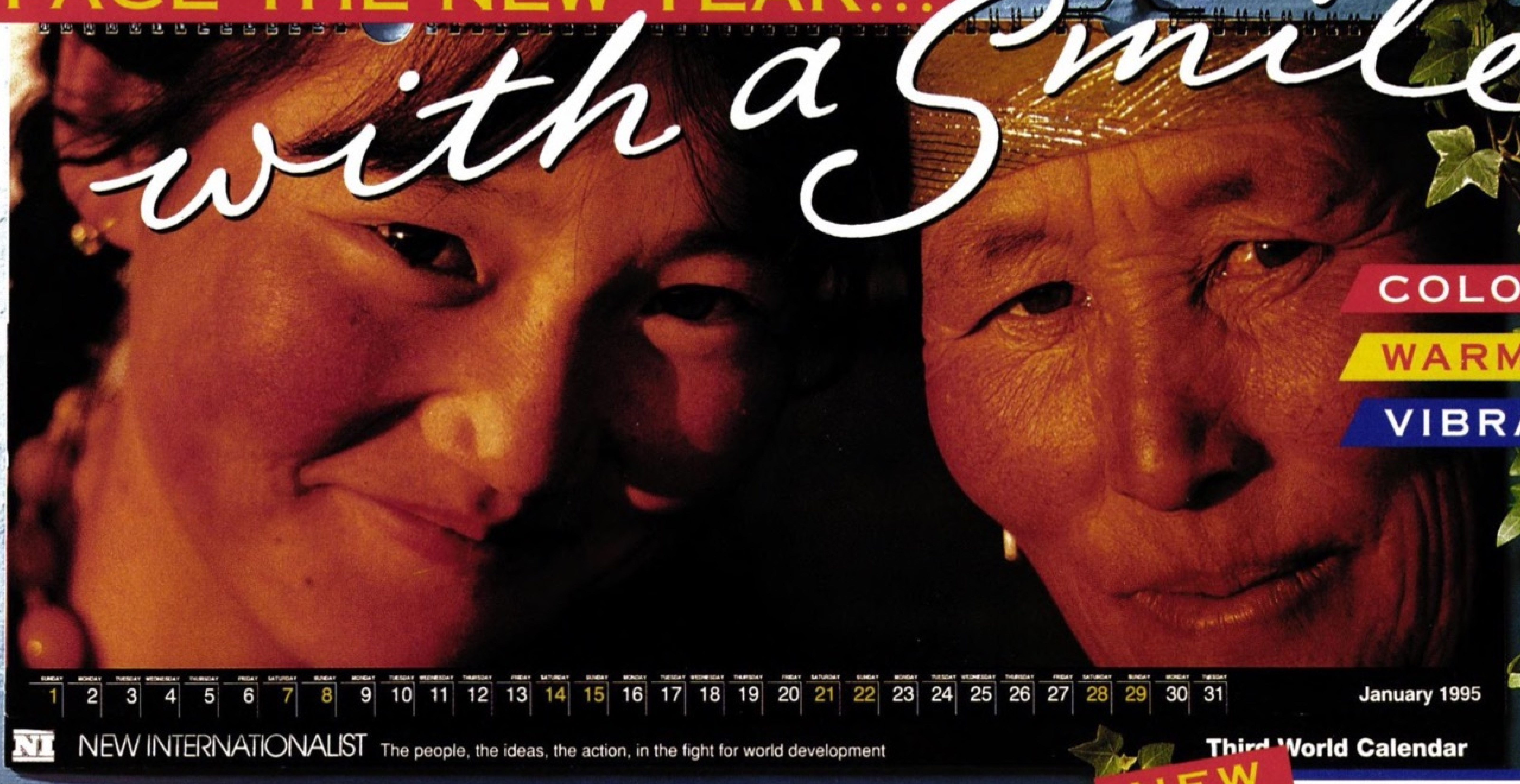

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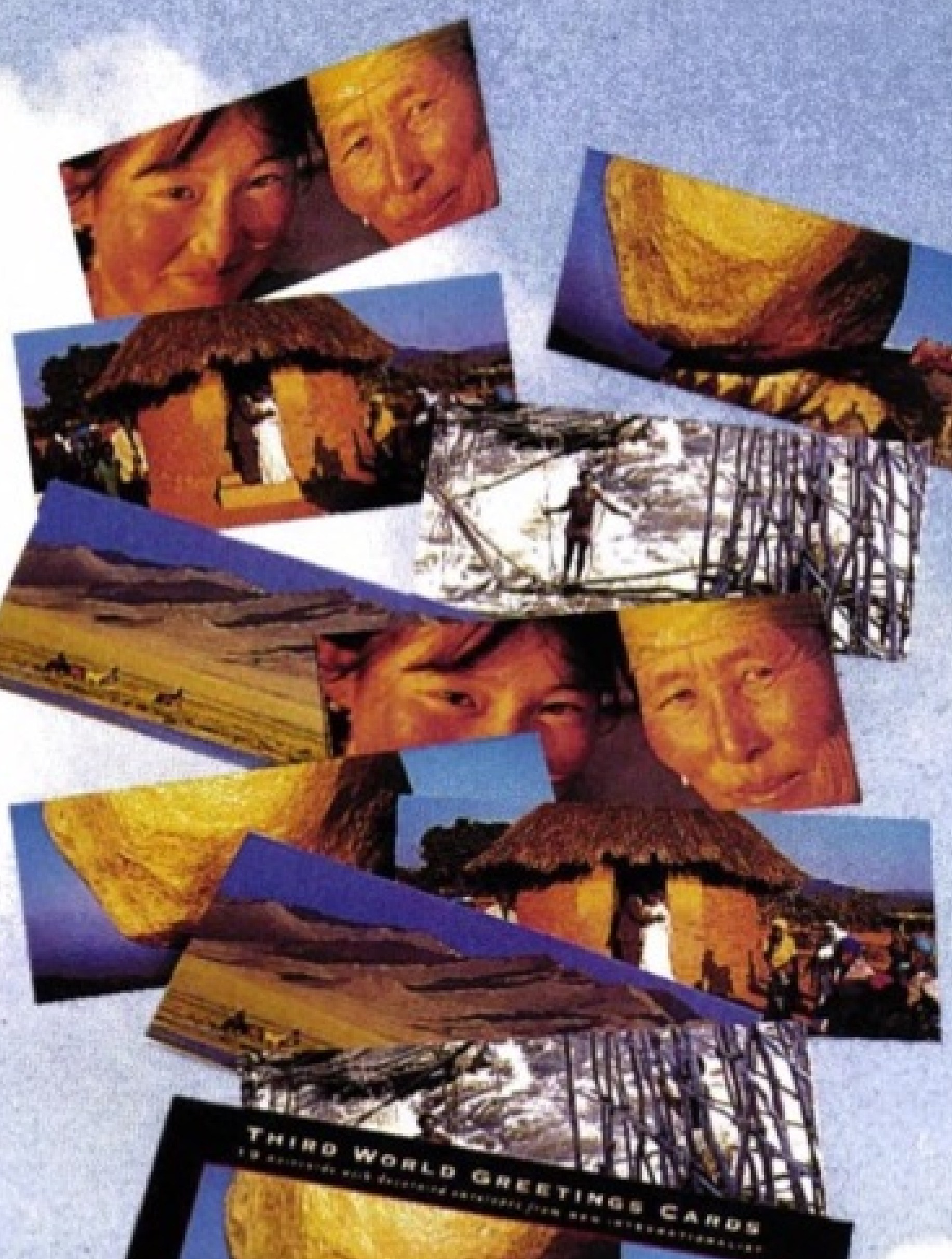

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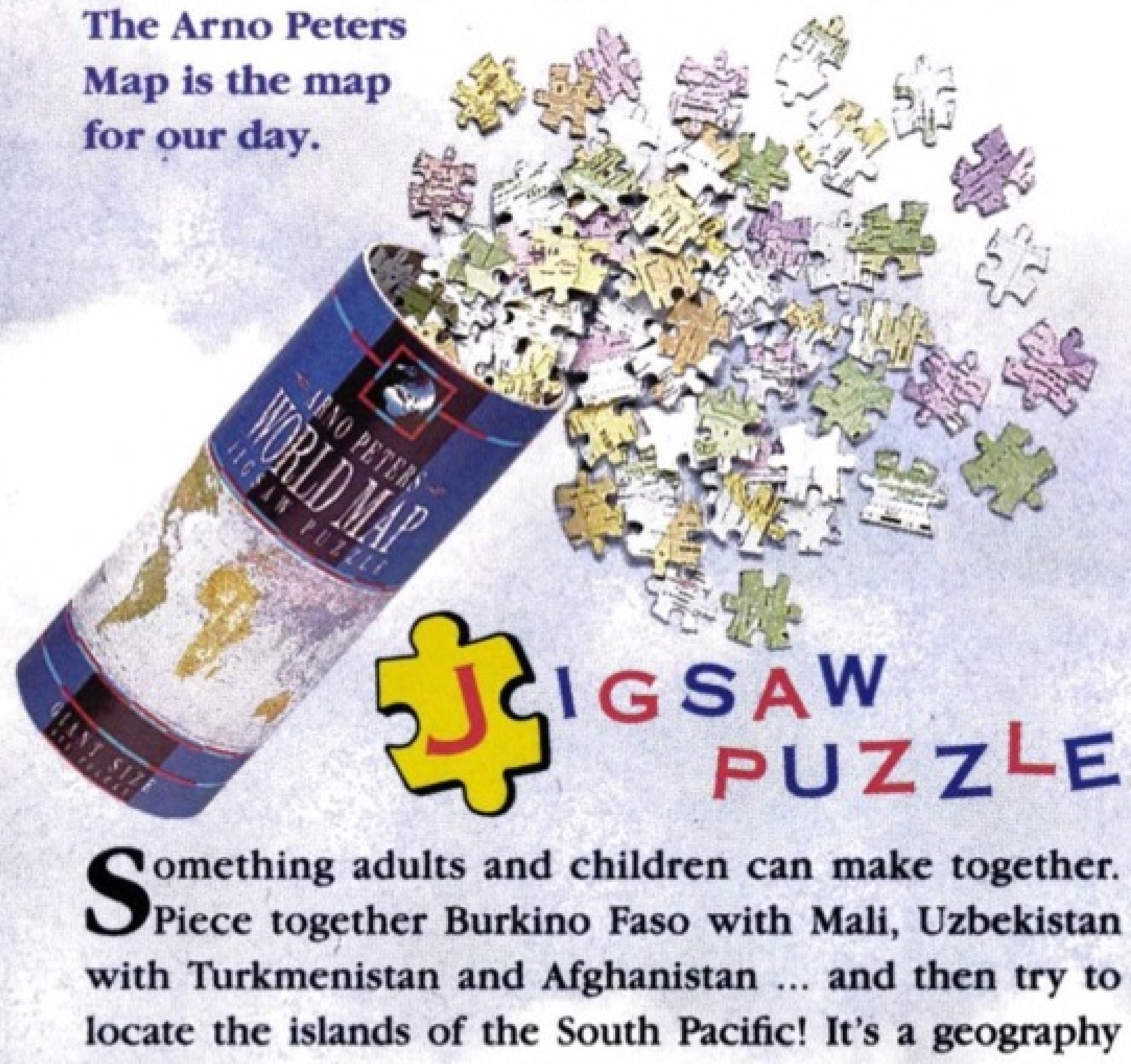

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SO YOU THOUGHT THE PARTY WAS OVER FOR THE RICH? DON'T YOU BELIEVE IT. Between 1987 and 1993 the number of billionaire families and individuals more than doubled, from 98 to 233.[1] In 1960 the richest one-fifth of the world's people were 30 times richer than the poorest fifth. By 1991 they were 61 times richer.[2] *Fortune*, the in-house magazine for the seriously rich, complains that the dollar-billionaires' club is getting less exclusive. The world's richest 101 individuals and families now control wealth valued at some $452 billion. This is more than the total yearly income of the entire population of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria and Indonesia put together: one-and-a-half billion people in all.[3]

Filthy Rich!

101 BILLIONAIRES[1]

In 1993 *Fortune* magazine listed the 101 richest people in the world. All such lists are, of course, pretty meaningless since most billionaires keep their affairs secret for tax reasons. But some are very keen indeed to feature on these lists to increase their business credibility. The pursuit of super-riches remains a male obsession: just four of the 101 billionaires are women. Here, in broad categories, is a selective glimpse into the things they get up to...

PROPERTY/CONSTRUCTION:
NUMBER OF BILLIONAIRES: 11
TOTAL WEALTH: $50.8 billion

The Japanese have cornered the top end of the super-rich property-speculation business, largely due to the phenomenal prices of property in Tokyo. The Mori brothers ($13.0 billion) inherited a small part of central Tokyo from their dad, and that's enough to make them Japan's richest men. Toichi Takenaka ($7.1 billion) like many Japanese billionaires, favours golf-course development. Masakuni Osano ($4.3 billion) says 'it is an honour to be listed as a billionaire, but actually I wonder if I'm really rich or not'. Outside Japan, Lee Shau-Kee ($3.1 billion, Hong Kong) creeps into the listings with his relatively modest Henderson Development Company.

RETAILING:
NUMBER OF BILLIONAIRES: 16
TOTAL WEALTH: $75.5 billion

The Waltons ($23.5 billion, US) own Wal-Mart Stores, live in Arkansas and are close to the Clinton family. Karl and Theo Albrecht ($3.3 billion, Germany) operate the Aldi stores – in winter they have been known to turn down the heating and give their employees gloves to fend off frostbite. Rudolf August Oetker ($2.6 billion, Germany) once refused to stay in a hotel he owns because it was too expensive.

MANUFACTURING:
NUMBER OF BILLIONAIRES: 18
TOTAL WEALTH: $79.9 billion

The Mars family ($14.0 billion, US) owns the company that makes candy and pet food. Charles and David Kock ($4.7 billion, US) run the second-biggest private company in the US, dealing in oil and gas. David is a former Libertarian Party candidate for US Vice President. The three Quandt children ($4.0 billion, Germany) each inherited 20% of the BMW car company. Susanne claims that her husband didn't know she was a Quandt until the night before their wedding.

Kunio Busujima ($3.8 billion, Japan), and Kenkichi Nakajima ($3.1 billion, Japan) got rich by making *pachinko* machines for Japanese gamblers. The Irving brothers ($3.7 billion, Canada), turn timber to newspaper and crude oil to unleaded fuel for their gas-stations. Godtfred Kirk Kristiansen ($2.2 billion, Denmark) makes about 11 billion Lego bricks every year that sell in 100 different countries.

MEDIA/PUBLISHING/LEISURE:
NUMBER OF BILLIONAIRES: 16
TOTAL WEALTH: $68.9 billion

Si and Donald Newhouse ($10.0 billion, US) own a media empire that now includes *Self* magazine which distributes his-and-her leather condom cases as promotional items. The Azcárraga family ($3.7 billion, Mexico) owns Televisa (which reaches 90% of the Mexican TV audience) and 80% of Mexico's magazines. Emilio, 'El Tigre', reportedly donated $70 million to the ruling PRI presidential election coffers.

William Bernard Ziff ($3.0 billion, US) got rich from computer magazines and is a keen environmentalist who can recite the Latin name of every endangered tree species along the eastern US coast. Reinhard Mohn ($2.6 billion, Germany) owns 89.3% of the media giant Bertelsman AG and claims to have learned his business techniques during the two years he spent as a German prisoner-of-war in Kansas. Silvio Berlusconi ($2.3 billion, Italy) began as a property speculator, became a TV-and-football mogul and has now diversified into the lucrative business of right-wing Italian politics by getting himself elected Prime Minister.

MONARCHS AND NOBLES:
NUMBER OF BILLIONAIRES: 9
TOTAL WEALTH: $80.2 billion

Three of the top ten richest people in the world account for two-thirds of this total sum. Two of these (the Sultan of Brunei and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia) get their money from oil companies in exchange for political favours. The third is the British Queen.

Sheikh Jaber Ahmed al-Sabah ($7.0 billion, Kuwait) escaped assassination in 1984 and is now back in business after the Gulf War. Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashid al-Maktoum ($5.0 billion, Dubai) heads a family that takes it in turn to run the country while the others go horse-racing in the UK. Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahayan ($5.0 billion, Abu Dhabi) lacks any formal education which may have led to his entanglement in the BCCI banking scandal. Gerald Grosvenor, Duke of Westminster ($2.3 billion, UK) inherited large chunks of Mayfair and Belgravia in London.

FINANCE/TRADING:
NUMBER OF BILLIONAIRES: 31
TOTAL WEALTH: $96.3 billion

Ronald Owen Perelman ($5.9 billion, US) made $1 billion in tax benefits out of Savings & Loans institutions he bought for a song after they collapsed. Chung Ju-Yung ($4.1 billion, South Korea) owns 34.2% of the engineering company Hyundai and is known as 'Korea's Ross Perot' because of his political ambitions. Seiji Tsutsumi ($3.5 billion, Japan), poorer than his younger brother Yshiaki Tsutsumi ($3.9 billion, Japan) owns 200 trading companies and writes award-winning poetry under the *nom de plume* Takashi Tsuji. Liem Sioe Liong ($3.0 billion, Indonesia) is currently sinking a fortune into 'developing' islands around Singapore. Carlos 'Slim' Helu ($2.9 billion, Mexico) is a 'turnaround artist' who got fat from the privatization of the Mexican telephone company Telemex.

'MILLIONAIRE' OR 'BILLIONAIRE' – THERE IS ONLY ONE LETTER DIFFERENT, SO WE NEED TO REMIND OURSELVES THAT IT TAKES A *THOUSAND* MILLIONAIRES TO MAKE *ONE* BILLIONAIRE.

TIPS FOR THE TOP

The best route to riches is to be a monarch, preferably absolute, which also helps with tax bills. The Sultan of Brunei rules a tiny, oil-rich Sultanate on the island of Borneo courtesy of oil companies like Shell; he pockets the royalties himself, while 20% of the population live beneath the poverty line and a third of women cannot read. King Fahd of Saudi Arabia has a similar deal. In the UK Queen Elizabeth's private art hoard is speculatively valued at $5 billion.

THE 10 RICHEST PEOPLE IN THE WORLD

			$ BILLION
1	The Sultan of Brunei (Brunei)	Head of State (Oil)	37.0
2	The Walton Family (US)	Retailing	23.5
3	Forrest Mars and family (US)	Confectionery	14.0
4	Minoru and Akira Mori (Japan)	Property	13.0
5	Si and Donald Newhouse (US)	Publishing	10.0
6	King Fahd (Saudi Arabia)	Head of State (Oil)	10.0
7	John Kluge (US)	Media	8.8
8	Gad and Hans Rausing (UK)	Packaging	8.5
9	Queen Elizabeth (UK)	Head of State	7.8
10	Toichi Takenaka (Japan)	Construction	7.1

Wealth and well-being

There's a limit to how fit you can be, how long you can live, how much food you can eat, how much love you can make and how many songs you can sing. Wealth and well-being are not the same thing. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has come up with a new measure of 'wealth' it calls the Human Development Index (HDI).

This index measures levels of education and health while discounting the value of incomes beyond a certain point. So some countries that seem to have a lot of money, like Saudi Arabia and Luxembourg, do relatively badly on the HDI because they neglect general welfare in favour of the rich and super-rich.

Others that don't have a lot of money, like China and Costa Rica, do relatively well on the HDI because they have been more willing to use what they do have for human development. The countries that did best on this index between 1960 and 1992 are Japan, Spain, Hong Kong, Singapore, Cyprus, Greece, Barbados, Malaysia, Jamaica and Portugal – although some, like Malaysia, might fare less well if human rights were included on the HDI, which they are not.

The HDI doesn't show wealth differentials within countries, either: black South Africans taken separately would rank 123 on the Index, just above Congo, while whites would rank 24, just below Spain. And the North/South divide persists – almost all the countries that are high on the HDI are in the North.

Human Development Index 1992[2]

RANK	Country	Index
HIGH – 0.886		
1	Canada	0.932
2	Switzerland	0.931
3	Japan	0.929
4	Sweden	0.928
5	Norway	0.928
6	France	0.927
7	Australia	0.926
8	USA	0.925
9	Netherlands	0.923
10	United Kingdom	0.919
11	Germany	0.918
12	Austria	0.917
13	Belgium	0.916
14	Iceland	0.914
15	Denmark	0.912
16	Finland	0.911
17	Luxembourg	0.908
18	New Zealand	0.907
19	Israel	0.900
20	Barbados	0.894
21	Ireland	0.892
22	Italy	0.891
23	Spain	0.888
24	Hong Kong	0.875
25	Greece	0.874
26	Cyprus	0.873
27	Czechoslovakia	0.872
28	Lithuania	0.868
29	Estonia	0.867
30	Latvia	0.865
31	Hungary	0.863
32	South Korea	0.859
33	Uruguay	0.859
34	Russia	0.858
35	Trinidad/Tobago	0.855
36	Bahamas	0.854
37	Argentina	0.853
38	Chile	0.848
39	Costa Rica	0.848
40	Belarus	0.847
41	Malta	0.843
42	Portugal	0.838
43	Singapore	0.836
44	Brunei	0.829
45	Ukraine	0.823
46	Venezuela	0.820
47	Panama	0.816
48	Bulgaria	0.815
49	Poland	0.815
50	Colombia	0.813
51	Kuwait	0.809
52	Mexico	0.804
53	Armenia	0.801
MEDIUM – 0.649		
54	Thailand	0.798
55	Antigua & Barb.	0.796
56	Qatar	0.795
57	Malaysia	0.794
58	Bahrain	0.791
59	Fiji	0.787
60	Mauritius	0.778
61	Kazakhstan	0.774
62	U. Arab Emirates	0.771
63	Brazil	0.756
64	Dominica	0.749
65	Jamaica	0.749
66	Georgia	0.747
67	Saudi Arabia	0.742
68	Turkey	0.739
69	St Vincent	0.732
70	St Kitts & Nevis	0.730
71	Azerbaijan	0.730
72	Romania	0.729
73	Syrian Arab Rep.	0.727
74	Ecuador	0.718
75	Moldova	0.714
76	Albania	0.714
77	St Lucia	0.709
78	Grenada	0.707
79	Libya	0.703
80	Turkmenistan	0.697
81	Tunisia	0.690
82	Kyrgyzstan	0.689
83	Seychelles	0.685
84	Paraguay	0.679
85	Suriname	0.677
86	Iran	0.672
87	Botswana	0.670
88	Belize	0.666
89	Cuba	0.666
90	Sri Lanka	0.665
91	Uzbekistan	0.664
92	Oman	0.654
93	South Africa	0.650
94	China	0.644
95	Peru	0.642
96	Dominican Rep.	0.638
97	Tajikistan	0.629
98	Jordan	0.628
99	Philippines	0.621
100	Iraq	0.614
101	N. Korea	0.609
102	Mongolia	0.607
103	Lebanon	0.600
104	Samoa	0.596
105	Indonesia	0.586
106	Nicaragua	0.583
107	Guyana	0.580
108	Guatemala	0.564
109	Algeria	0.553
110	Egypt	0.551
111	Morocco	0.549
112	El Salvador	0.543
113	Bolivia	0.530
114	Gabon	0.525
115	Honduras	0.524
116	Vietnam	0.514
117	Swaziland	0.513
118	Maldives	0.511
LOW – 0.355		
119	Vanuatu	0.489
120	Lesotho	0.476
121	Zimbabwe	0.474
122	Cape Verde	0.474
123	Congo	0.461
124	Cameroon	0.447
125	Kenya	0.434
126	Solomon Is.	0.434
127	Namibia	0.425
128	São Tomé	0.409
129	Papua New G.	0.408
130	Myanmar	0.406
131	Madagascar	0.396
132	Pakistan	0.393
133	Laos	0.385
134	Ghana	0.382
135	India	0.382
136	Côte d'Ivoire	0.370
137	Haiti	0.354
138	Zambia	0.352
139	Nigeria	0.348
140	Zaire	0.341
141	Comoros	0.331
142	Yemen	0.323
143	Senegal	0.322
144	Liberia	0.317
145	Togo	0.311
146	Bangladesh	0.309
147	Cambodia	0.307
148	Tanzania	0.306
149	Nepal	0.289
150	Equat. Guinea	0.276
151	Sudan	0.276
152	Burundi	0.276
153	Rwanda	0.274
154	Uganda	0.272
155	Angola	0.271
156	Benin	0.261
157	Malawi	0.260
158	Mauritania	0.254
159	Mozambique	0.252
160	C. African Rep.	0.249
161	Ethiopia	0.249
162	Bhutan	0.247
163	Djibouti	0.226
164	Guinea-Bissau	0.224
165	Somalia	0.217
166	Gambia	0.215
167	Mali	0.214
168	Chad	0.212
169	Niger	0.209
170	Sierra Leone	0.209
171	Afghanistan	0.208
172	Burkina Faso	0.203
173	Guinea	0.191

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1 *Fortune International*, 28 June 1993. 2 *Human Development Report 1994*, United Nations Development Programme. 3 Population figures for 1992 from *World Development Report 1993*, World Bank.

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PULLOUT

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